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EAST-INDIA QUESTION.

DEBATES

AT THE

GENERAL COURT OF PROPRIETORS

OF

EAST-INDIA STOCK,

ON

THE 17TH AND 23D FEBRUARY 1813,

ON

A PETITION TO PARLIAMENT

FOR A

RENEWAL

OF THE

COMPANY'S CHARTER

AS FAR AS IT REGARDS

THEIR EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGES.

BY THE EDITOR OF THE FORMER DEBATES.

WITH AN

APPENDIX:

CONTAINING

A Copy of the Petition, and the Report of the Committee of Secret Correspondence, detailing Observations and Opinions on the several Petitions from the Outports, &c. &c.

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1813.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE *Editor* has, at length, completed the Debates held at the several adjourned COURTS OF PROPRIETORS, on what, for distinction's sake, has been called

THE INDIA QUESTION:

and whether it be considered in respect to the welfare of the *Company*, the happiness of *Eastern millions*, or the safety of the *British Empire*, it is one of the most momentous questions that could agitate the interest, the talents, and the honour of the greatest orators and statesmen. As the same question is to be solemnly discussed in the Houses of Parliament, he conjures the Members of both, before they make up their minds on light persuasion, or popular grounds, to study the opinion, and weigh the arguments of those, whose lives have been conversant in, and whose abilities devoted to, the commerce and legislation of so vast an Empire.

He has added, in an Appendix, the Petition of the East India Company; and a Report of the Committee of Correspondence, so frequently alluded to in the Debates—a Report, whose perspicuity of arrangement, and soundness of reasoning, cannot fail to convince the judgment of all those who are unbiassed and independent.

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PROCEEDINGS, &c.

EAST-INDIA HOUSE, *February* 17, 1813.

THE Minutes of the last Court having been read—

Sir Hugh Inglis (the Chairman) opened the proceedings by stating,—he had to inform the Proprietors, that the present Court was summoned to take into consideration a *Petition* which was prepared to be laid before Parliament *for the renewal of the Company's Charter;* which, with their permission, should be immediately read to them.

The Petition (for which see Appendix) having been read;

Sir Hugh Inglis, in continuation, observed, that the Court having heard the Petition read, he need not state to them that it was one of no common importance. On the fate of that Petition depended *their* dearest interests—the multifarious interests of different bodies connected with the city of London, the river Thames, and all the

adjacent country—the prosperity and good government of the Company's territories in India—the happiness of millions of persons committed to their charge in that country—and, "though last, not least," the security of the immense revenue collected in England, through the Indian Commerce, as now carried on;—for if, by the proposed alteration, any great change were to be effected in that revenue, there could be no doubt, that the general welfare of the whole country would be much impaired by it.—(*Hear! hear!*) Having stated this, and the Petition having been read to the Court, he would merely observe, that it was scarcely possible for gentlemen to carry the whole of its contents in their minds, from *one* reading.—(*Hear! hear!*) He should, therefore, submit to the Court, if they were anxious to come to a decision that day, to have the petition read over again—(*Hear! hear!*) It was not the wish of the Court of Directors to proceed precipitately on this great question; but, at the same time, they felt that delay was not desirable. They were expected to come forward with their cause speedily. He hoped it was a good one—(*Hear! hear!*)—and he believed the more generally the state of that cause was known, on a higher and more elevated ground would the Company stand in public estimation.—(*Hear! hear!*) It rested

with the Court, either to come to a decision immediately, or to express their wishes for a farther delay. If they should prefer delay, he hoped it would not be for any considerable time.

There was only one point more connected with the Petition that had just been read, which he would touch upon before he sat down: certain blanks were left for the amount of bonds paid off by the Company, the reason for which was, that as the sums were fluctuating every day, the amount could not be inserted correctly till the day when the Petition should be presented to Parliament. He had to observe on this subject, that the Company were authorised by law to raise £7,000,000 by bonds; but, from circumstances, which must be evident to every gentleman in that Court, those bonds had been coming in of late more rapidly than the Company had any reason to expect; or than would have been the case, under more favourable circumstances. It might, however, be satisfactory for the Court to know how the bonds stood at present. There were outstanding against the Company, bonds to the amount of £5,441,000 of the £7,000,000 they were allowed to raise. In conclusion, the Chairman observed, he should be very happy to hear the sentiments of any honourable Proprietor on the Petition.

Mr. *Rock* observed, that every person who had heard the Petition just read, must perceive at one glance, that the Court was assembled at an awful crisis. He would, therefore, ask, whether it was more proper to come to a decision then, or to postpone their determination to a future day. The subject was one of the utmost importance; the existence of the Company was at stake; and, in making up their minds, they ought to proceed with the most serious deliberation. For that purpose he thought a short delay was advisable. If, therefore, he proposed an adjournment to Monday or Tuesday next, he hoped it would not be considered too distant a period. Should it be the opinion of the gentlemen on the other side of the bar, that they ought to meet earlier, he should have no objection; but he trusted that the Court would avoid every thing that looked like precipitation. The honourable proprietor was proceeding to move "That the Court should adjourn to Tuesday next, to take the Petition into consideration," when

Sir Hugh Inglis suggested to him, not to move the adjournment of *the Court*, but *of the consideration of the Petition*, to another day; perhaps there were other communications, necessary to be then made to the Court.

Mr. *Rock* observed, that he did not mean to

interfere with any ulterior business which it might be thought proper to bring forward.

Mr. *Trower* said, he, for one, was ready to come to an immediate decision. The question had been long before the Court, and, as it had been maturely considered, he was of opinion, that they ought then to state their determination. The Petition which had been just read, it was true, differed considerably from that which it was formerly intended to present; but the alterations appeared to him to be most judicious, and were perfectly suited to the situation in which the Company were placed. But the subject matter of the petition was well understood; they long since knew the point to which they should be driven; and, therefore, nothing novel was contained in the petition. Like all the other papers which had proceeded from the Court of Directors, it was an able, enlightened, and comprehensive production.—*(Hear! hear!)*—The subject had been so often discussed, that nothing new could be advanced upon it: the question had, indeed, been almost exhausted; and under such circumstances, it was with very great diffidence he trespassed on the attention of the Court, being aware of the difficulty of touching on any point which had not already been noticed. He thought, however, that the attention of the Court should

be called to their real situation, that they might see the necessity of making exertions, both collectively and individually, in support of their rights. At a former period, His Majesty's Ministers had come to an agreement with the Company, that certain points were to be given up as the basis of the renewal of their charter. The petition drawn up on this foundation was to receive the support of Ministers. Subsequently, however, they had called on the Court of Directors to agree to farther concessions: these concessions they considered hostile to the best interests of the Company; and, therefore, they had resisted them. This had led to a rupture of the negociation; and they were then about to present themselves at the bar of the Legislature, unsupported by his Majesty's Ministers—depending solely on the expediency of the measure, and the justice of their cause. The difficult situation in which they were placed, in consequence, was obvious; but he hoped that Parliament would not suffer this great Company to be sacrificed to a clamour set up by a few misjudging and interested individuals. That the Government of the country should support the delusion was astonishing; that they should join in the cry could scarcely be believed; but, such being the fact, it was the duty of the Court to oppose, with all their

strength, the parties who had risen up against them. They ought not to be surprised, nor intimidated, by the loudness or clamour of their enemies. A reference to their history would shew, that, at a former period, they were assailed by enemies equally loud and equally noisy. But, at that time, the firmness of the Company, backed by the wisdom of Parliament, was able to silence their adversaries, as he hoped they would now be able to silence the empty declamations of the advocates of the Outports.—*(Hear! hear!)*—He wished not to speak disrespectfully of any set of men; but he would call on the Court to look at their pamphlets, which contained neither fair argument nor sound reasoning; but abounded in declamation without argument, and assertion without proof. Yet such were the models to which they were sent by His Majesty's Ministers, to learn the lessons of wisdom, and imbibe the maxims of prudence.—*(Hear! hear!)*—In some of these pamphlets the history of the trade of the Portuguese with India was quoted as a proof that an unrestricted commerce with that Company might be carried on with success; and as affording evidence that a chartered monopoly was unnecessary. Now admitting the fact that the trade of the Portuguese was an open one, he drew a very different inference from that which

the opponents of the Company thought proper to deduce. In his opinion, they ought to ascribe the destruction of the Portuguese power and fame in India, to the enormous excesses of individuals connected with the private trade; which excesses and enormities would never have been committed had the trade been regulated by the wholesome superintendance of a Company.—*(Hear! hear!)* —In that case, the natives would not have opened their arms to the Dutch to deliver them from those oppressions under which they suffered from the cupidity and avarice of those free adventurers. —*(Hear! Hear!)*—Some persons had bolstered up their own sentiments, by quoting the authority of Dr. Adam Smith, who had expressed a decided opinion against the interests of the Company. Every thing which fell from that great man was entitled to respect; but it should be recollected, that, since he wrote, a very essential alteration had taken place in the situation of the Company. At that time, they were, *politically*, of little importance; but they were now, in that respect, of mighty moment.—*(Hear! hear!)*—And the present question was more nearly connected with their *duties* as *sovereigns*, than their *privileges* as *merchants*.—*(Hear! hear!)*—It did not, therefore, follow, because fifty years ago Dr. Smith, in a treatise on political economy, gave an opinion

adverse to the Company, that he should now under circumstances entirely new, adhere to the same opinion.—*(Hear! hear!)*—But, even if it were otherwise, if it were deemed more proper to decide the question by a reference to authorities, than by the evidence of facts, the friends of the Company could adduce opinions in their favour, not merely of philosophers, but of statesmen, the greatest this country ever saw. Many of those opinions had already been mentioned; and he now wished to add to the list the name of the immortal Burke, whose opinion on this subject was entitled to greater weight, because it proceeded from one of the most determined and formidable enemies the Company ever had.—Speaking on Mr Fox's bill, he thus expressed himself—"I feel an insuperable reluctance to lend my hand to destroy any established form of government, for a theory however perfect.—My experience teaches me nothing clear on this subject—I have known merchants with the sentiments and abilities of great statesmen, and I have seen persons in the situation of statesmen, with the characters and conceptions of pedlars." *(Laughter.)* Mr. Burke went on to say, that no accidental circumstance, that nothing but the most imperious necessity should induce the Parliament to take the ma-

nagement of the affairs of India out of the Company's hands. *(Hear! hear!)* Such was the opinion of that great man, at the very moment when he was shaking the foundation of their authority, by the thunders of his eloquence. *(Hear! hear!)* A reference to what occurred at that period, would afford a very strong argument in favour of the present system. For if, when abuses were admitted to exist, which called for another hand to rectify—if, under circumstances, over which he would rather throw the veil of oblivion, than call them to the recollection of the Court—if, in such a state of things, it was not deemed expedient to strip the Company of their rights and privileges—with how much less propriety can such a measure now be advanced, when all parties concurred in bearing witness to the happiness and security of millions who are placed under their sway!—*(Hear! Hear!)* It might, formerly, have been observed, with some degree of propriety, that whatever was the hazard of the experiment, the danger was such as called for it; for it was to secure the liberty of the natives of India, who had a strong claim on humanity and justice. But now the arguments were all on the other side. The benefits held out were merely problematical and contingent, while the evils were certain and perma-

nent. *(Hear! hear!)* To the inhabitants of India it was a melancholy prospect, threatening to destroy that peaceful security, that happy tranquillity, which they had so long enjoyed under the mild and beneficent government of the Company. *(Hear! hear!)* What might they not fear from the influx of private adventurers, who would feel no sympathy for the inhabitants of those countries?—What might they not fear from men who would take advantage of the mild character of those people, to beggar them by extortion, and crush them to the earth by their cruelties?—The torrent of revolution would ultimately overwhelm, not only those who produced, but those who deprecated the evil. The country would at length rise in revenge against its oppressors; the innocent and the guilty would alike fall victims to the rage of the people, and the English, like the Portuguese, would be swept from the Peninsula. *(Hear! hear!)* Admitting, however, that there were good grounds for altering the system, no period could have been selected, for that purpose, more improper or more injudicious, than that which His Majesty's Ministers had chosen. They had not chosen it either with reference to the present state of the Country, or the affairs of the Company, but they had been influenced by a clamour out of doors.

That clamour appeared to have effected a very great alteration in their minds—it had occasioned them to turn their backs on their old faithful friends, the East-India Company. And it was to be hoped that the new light which they had discovered, would direct them in removing every monopoly of the rights of man.—Yet these were the Ministers, who made it their boast that they trod in the footsteps of the immortal Pitt!—Ministers, who, while they sympathised with the petitioners from the outports, had no sympathy for the religious feelings of millions of their fellow-subjects in Ireland.—Ministers who, while they advocated freedom of trade, were imposing an embargo on conscience; who, while they deprecated a commercial monopoly, were supporting, with all their power, a monopoly of religion! *(Hear! hear!)*

He had observed, that no period could be worse chosen for those innovations, and he called upon the Court to examine the truth of his statement. It was in the midst of one of the most extensive and distressing wars this country was ever engaged in—a war which had continued for twenty years—for he took no account of the short and feverish peace of 1801, which was a cessation of arms, but not of hostility—a war by which the East-India Company had suffered more than any other class of His

Majesty's subjects—not merely by the increased expenditure necessary for the protection of their trade, not merely by the diminution of that trade, but by wars carried on in India, for the benefit of the empire—which had exhausted their revenue, and left them burdened with debt!—Wars commenced not only contrary to their wish and to their instruction, but contrary to the spirit of their Charter. (*Hear! hear!*) At the same time, he meant not to quarrel with the motives which occasioned these wars, that were conducted with ability, and concluded with success. But, as they were prosecuted for national objects, the expense ought to have been defrayed out of the national purse. (*Hear! hear!*) Such was the period Ministers had selected for making this alteration—a period not of prosperity, but of distress—when the pressure upon their affairs was greater than at any former time. To complete the picture, let them call to mind the promises which were held out to them by the Charter of 1793—let the Court look at the items which were disposed of by a single dash of the pen.—Large annual payments to government—a guarantee fund of £12,000,000—immense profits to the Company—these were the sanguine expectations then cherished. But these phantoms of the imagination had vanished,

and they might now contrast their actual condition, loaded with a debt of £30,000,000, with these visionary promises. Having done this, it must be allowed, if ever there was a period when the Company had a right to complain of disappointed expectations, it was now —having suffered, and suffered severely, not from any fault of their own, but from those sacrifices which they had made for the good of their Country. And, on the other hand, if ever there was a period when the Company were entitled to the support and assistance of Parliament, if ever there was a period when they deserved to be protected against the clamours and encroachments of their enemies, and to have their privileges preserved to them entire, the present was that period.—*(Hear!)* From the Ministers who had selected such a time for innovation, who had joined in the general outcry against them—and called on them, imperatively, to make such extraordinary sacrifices, they could expect no assistance—but, from the wisdom of Parliament they might hope for every thing—on their justice they might rely—to them they might safely confide, not their own interests only, but the interests of millions, which were committed to their care—with these truths the Court were long acquainted, and, therefore, he saw no necessity

for putting off the debate. They had only now to rest their cause on the decision of Parliament —and to that tribunal their appeal should be made without delay.

Mr. *K. Smith* said, he was never more surprised than when he saw the hon. gentleman (Mr. Rock) rise to put off their decision till Monday or Tuesday. The petition he considered as one of the most masterly that wa, ever drawn up; and he was one of those who thought, that no delay should take place in presenting it; they would lose, instead of gaining ground. While they delayed, those who were opposed to them were making every possible exertion. At that moment, delegates from Scotland, England, and Ireland, were collecting all the interests they could, to destroy the rights and privileges of the Company; and the longer they were detained from going before Parliament, the more formidable did their enemies become. In his opinion, the Court were ready, at that moment, to come to a decision, and the sooner they did so the better.

Mr. *Impey* said, that, merely as an individual, he should be as ready to come to an immediate decision, as any person in that Court. It was a question which he and many others had so fully considered, that they were perfectly com-

petent to judge of it in all its bearings.—But still, there were two reasons which induced him to vote for a short adjournment. In the first place, it was not every gentleman in that Court who had paid the same attention to the subject, and to the Petition, as he, and perhaps some others, had done—to such gentlemen time ought to be allowed, that they might examine the various subjects it contains.—There was another consideration of still more importance, which had been urged on a former occasion—and that was, the way in which they ought to come before the public—if, immediately after reading so long a paper, without further reflection, they should agree to it, their enemies would say, and the public might think, the Company were influenced by no consideration but their own interest, they would appear to act with hurry and precipitation—without taking time to deliberate. Was it not better, he would ask, for the Company to create an opinion in their favour, by agreeing to the short adjournment which the hon. proprietor had moved? The delay to Monday or Tuesday could make very little difference to the Court; they could then come to a decision with more dignity, and their Petition would, consequently, have greater weight with Parliament itself.

Mr. *R. Jackson* said, as the proposition had not been seconded, he rose for the purpose of doing himself the honour of seconding the motion for adjourning the consideration of the Petition till Tuesday next.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* informed the Court, that there was another Petition to be laid before them, and it would be better, he thought, if, when it was read, the consideration of both should be adjourned to the same day.

The second Petition (for which see Appendix,) was then read.

Mr. *Hume*, in reference to certain remittances of bullion, mentioned in the Petition, inquired, whether they arose from the surplus revenue of last year, or were transmitted to answer bills drawn in India on this country?

Sir *Hugh Inglis* answered, that these remittances were not for bills drawn on this country; and he had the pleasure of stating, that the surplus revenue of India, for last year, was £1,500,000.—*(Hear! hear!)* There were two other petitions; but as they were mere matters of form, being petitions praying leave to present petitions, he did not think there was any necessity to read them then.

Mr. *Rock* then moved, that the consideration of this Petition, as well as the former, be adjourned to Tuesday next.

Mr. *Impey* said, that several of the proprietors were anxious to know when those papers were likely to be printed.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* observed, he had some doubt whether it was perfectly decorous to print petitions before they were presented to the House of Commons. They might, however, be read by persons coming to the India House. He wished to give them publicity as soon as possible. The more the first was considered, the more it would redound to the interest of the Company. The moment it was presented, it should be printed.

Mr. *R. Jackson* said, the grounds on which he was about to recommend the Court to adjourn the consideration of the Petition, had been anticipated by his hon. friend (Mr. Impey). One of them was, that, although others and himself had exercised no inconsiderable industry on the subjects connected with the Petitions, and although their minds might be perfectly made up on the question, yet there were many hon. Proprietors present, and many absent, who could not be expected to understand all the points that were touched upon. The Petition, as it appeared to him, contained three great propositions—first, the history of the Company,—next, the rights which they possessed—and lastly, their

administration of those rights. These were the three greatest propositions that could well be devised on the subject—each of them was much reasoned upon—and, towards the latter part, a great number of statements in figures were introduced, which it was impossible for the human mind to follow and to understand with the mere assistance of a single reading. Therefore, he thought, it would not be candid to press an immediate decision on so important a document.

The other reason which influenced him, and which had also been anticipated by his honourable friend was, the situation in which they ought to appear before the country. Let the Court look to the situation in which it at present stood. They were not merely to confirm an act of the Directors, but they were expressly called upon to perform an act themselves. Lord Buckinghamshire had expressly desired, that the business in dispute should be referred to the whole of the Proprietors, in General Court assembled, and that the Directors should convey to Ministers the result. Consequently, this was not only in legal and formal *parlance*, the act of the Court, but was, in truth, the deliberate and digested act of the Proprietors. Now, it was not in human nature for any one to say (who had not made the subject his particular study), "I can sign my name

to this Petition—this body of reasoning—this allegation and assertion of right—this narrative of our history—this record of our claims, on no other ground than merely hearing it once read."

However public he should desire the Petition to be made, in point of decorum he did not think it could be printed, until it had been laid before Parliament. He never understood, when petitions were to be presented to persons of high consideration, as those who composed the Legislature undoubtedly were, that it was quite respectful to print them. He would, therefore, recommend, merely as an addition, not as a formal amendment, to the motion, that copies of the Petition should be left at the India-House for the information of such Proprietors as chose to examine them; which would meet every fair object of publicity, without being at all indecorous.

He was extremely glad that the question which had been put by an honourable Proprietor (Mr. Hume) had called forth the answer which had been given to it; for, if he had gone away without some such explanation, a misapprehension might have taken place. It might be supposed that, having been disappointed in the profits of their trade, and all their hopes and expectations having evaporated, as another honourable

Proprietor (Mr. Trower) had observed, these circumstances formed the strongest ground for refusing them a renewal of their charter; and, therefore, to counteract any such idea, it was proper that the real state of the case should be known, and that the whole body of the public should be aware of the true situation of the Company. In reference to what had fallen from that honourable Proprietor on the subject of the disappointments said to have been experienced by the Company since 1793, he thought it necessary to observe, lest these statements should be urged against them by their enemies, that Lord Melville would have been justified in anticipating even greater advantages than he had looked forward to in that year. For the correctness of this assertion, he would appeal to an honourable gentleman (Mr. Hume) as ingenious as any of them in his calculations: their prospects at that time had been by no means too highly coloured; but they were clouded by a vast train of events over which no human power had any controul—for which no human wisdom could provide—events relating rather to their Country than to themselves. If they had been distressed by those events, they had at least the satisfaction of proving that they were the victims sacrificed to the general good of the country:—*(Hear! hear!)*—

and they might go away with this proud, this glorious consolation, that, however they might have suffered; however their interests might have been impaired; however just the sacrifices they had made (and incalculably great they were); still, in proportion to those sacrifices their Country had risen in glory, prosperity, and security.—(*Hear! hear!*) This observation applied more particularly to the second Petition, because many persons, unacquainted with the circumstances, might deem it strange, that they who were applying for a renewal of their Charter, should also call for a fresh loan. This naked, abstract fact, unnoticed and unexplained, might operate against the Company. But as the fact really stood, as their revenue had been exhausted for national objects, no honourable man, no sound politician, could refrain from giving them that assistance which their exertions in the general cause of the empire rendered necessary. No person could support such a principle, unless he was prepared to say, that it was right and wise for the Dutch and Danes to be again placed in possession of those territories they formerly held in India—unless he was prepared to say, that the French should again possess that powerful footing which they had procured by intrigue, and which they would have held to the present hour, but for the expen-

diture of those sums which belonged to the Company, but which were applied to political purposes, in exterminating from the soil of India the enemies of the British empire. Surely, then, no man could refuse reimbursing them in these sums, unless, as he before observed, he was ready to admit, that the possessions of their enemies should be restored to them again. It would, in his opinion, be base and dishonest, and disgraceful, for any man to rise up in that Court, or elsewhere, to oppose such assistance being afforded to the East-India Company, except he meant to maintain, that the French, and the Dutch, and the Danes, should have their possessions given back to them, or that they ought never to have been dislodged from that country.—(*Hear! hear!*) In times so critical as these, when the reputation of the Company was attacked, when their existence was at stake, they ought not to permit any one fact, which might operate against the justice of their cause, to go forth unexplained or uncontradicted.—(*Hear! hear!*)

Mr. *Hume* said, when he took the liberty of putting a question to the honourable Chairman, it was not from any ignorance of the fact to which it referred, but he was anxious that the public should know it from official authority. He had reason to think that their most sanguine

expectations would be realized; and, therefore, he wished to check the desponding opinion which had been promulgated by an honourable proprietor (Mr. Trower). That honourable gentleman would have the Court understand, that all their views had been disappointed, and all their hopes deceived. He (Mr. Hume) was of a contrary opinion. They were not to receive those facts merely as stated, but they were to examine the events by which they were occasioned. He therefore wished to weaken the impression which might be made by the honourable gentleman's arguments; and to maintain, that the Company were not so much deceived and disappointed as he would lead the Court to believe. He thought that the fears expressed by the honourable gentleman of the dreadful effects which opening the trade would produce, contained the greatest libel on the Company's government in India that he had ever heard. It was impossible for a few petty adventurers to destroy the systematic order which the Company had established in India, and which he hoped would long flourish under their auspices. He had before said, and the assertion was founded on his own experience, that the present Government of India, admirably constituted, and ably administered as it was on all sides allowed to be, was sufficiently strong and powerful

to check any irregularities or disorders which, by possibility, could exist. The honourable gentleman had arraigned His Majesty's Ministers for bringing forward the question at the present moment; but he should have recollected, that it was the approaching expiration of their Charter, and not His Majesty's Ministers, which had rendered the consideration of the subject imperative, The Company went before Parliament because their situation rendered such a step necessary; but Ministers were not to blame, since the act was evidently that of the Company. He was anxious that it should not be thought that Ministers had selected this most unfortunate hour, as it had been termed; and he hoped the Court would not be carried away by the idea, that they had imposed an unnecessary trouble on themselves, since, in fact, it was a duty which had arisen from the circumstances of the case. With respect to the present being an unfavourable moment, he again differed from the honourable gentleman. For, if it were ever admitted that any change was necessary to be effected, surely this was the time: when India is in a state of profound repose,—when peace and quietness pervaded every part of those vast territories—when a surplus revenue, to a considerable amount, is about to be remitted—such a period was more peculiarly adapted for mak-

ing an alteration, than any other which had occurred from the commencement of the Charter to the present hour. He was anxious to have seconded the motion for adjournment, not on account of any of the reasons which had been assigned—but because he thought the first Petition contained one or two positions, which were at variance with each other, and ought, therefore, to be removed. The claim of the Company was as good and as just as any that had ever been laid before the Legislature, and he had no doubt that it would receive all the attention which its importance demanded. But he thought they should not be in such a hurry to make their request, as, by their precipitation, to refuse any thing, if they were not successful in obtaining the primary object. They called on the Legislature to grant them all that was consistent with their rights, and which was necessary for the good government of India; but, in a subsequent grant, having, in the first instance, thrown themselves on the wisdom and justice of Parliament, there were one or two words which, by some persons, might be considered as inconsistent with the general prayer of the Petition. And, here, he thought it right that he should avow the motives by which he was actuated. He had been called an enemy to the Company, but he denied the

accusation—his anxiety and his object were, to continue the prosperity of the Company—to increase their wealth—and to add to their security—every thing he had done, every thing he had said, had that view only—however unfortunate he was in the interpretation which had been put upon his conduct.—He thought the following sentence in the Petition was objectionable, and should be altered—" That it would be *unjustifiable* in the Company to become parties to any system, which, after mature consideration, they had the best founded reasons for believing would be an illusion." Now, having thrown themselves on the justice of Parliament, he did not think that they ought to say, they would refuse any thing.—He was of opinion, that, while they endeavoured to get all they could, they should not say "*no*" to any thing that was offered—(*Laughter*) He hoped, therefore, that time would be given to gentlemen to consider whether the Petition was consistent throughout; and, if it should appear, that the Company refused any thing, he trusted the paragraph containing such refusal, would be excluded.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* requested Mr. Hume to read the words again, to which he objected—Mr. Hume complied, observing, that it had been his intention to have asked for information on the

subject which was particularly alluded to in that passage; but he had waved his original design, in consequence of the motion for an adjournment.

Mr. *Pattison* (a Director) begged leave to offer a few words on a very important and a very curious point—the words which the hon. gent. had read did not exist in the Petition—*(Hear! hear!)* Now, though he had not found them there, it was evident he must have found them somewhere—the sentence which he read was—"That it would be *unjustifiable* in the Company to become parties to any system, which, after mature consideration, they had the best founded reasons for believing would be an illusion." He had brought forward the term *unjustifiable*, which was not contained in the wording of the Petition—now it was very remarkable, that this identical paragraph, on which the hon. Proprietor had commented, was the subject of considerable discussion in the Court of Directors—*(Hear! hear!)* —and it was still more extraordinary that the word *unjustifiable* did originally constitute a part of it—*(Hear! hear!)*—But the good sense of the Court operated to expunge that word, and the sentence was put in another shape,—more palatable to the Proprietors,—more respectful to the Hon. House before which the Petition was to be

laid—and less likely to be misunderstood—he would, therefore, inquire of the hon. Proprietor from what source he obtained his information—for, by some means or other he must have seen the Petition before it was amended—the Petition was considered a sort of secret in the Court of Directors, and by no means a matter of public notoriety. The hon. Proprietor appeared to have exerted the same industry with which he had before ineffectually endeavoured to enlighten the Court, to find out what?—That which did not now exist in the Petition—he should therefore now move, that the sentence be read—it would be found in an improved and modified state, and not subject to the objection which the hon. Proprietor had advanced.

The passage, which ran thus, was then read: "Your petitioners submit, that they *would not be justified*, in becoming parties to any system," &c.

Mr. *Hume* contended, that the paragraph was stronger than he had imagined; inasmuch as the *negative* of a *positive verb*, was more powerful than the *affirmative* of an *adjective*.—He did not found his objection on any particular word—but he asked, did not the whole sentence tend to the refusal of something?—that was the whole jut of his argument. As to the inquiry of the hon. Director, with respect to the source from whence he

derived his information, he must be aware, that it would be a breach of that good faith which he seemed to prize so much himself, if he (Mr. Hume) in answer to a public question, should divulge a private communication—he might, however, without any breach of confidence, observe, that perhaps the information came from the hon. Director himself.

Mr. *Pattison* requested the hon. gent. to repeat the sentence with which he had concluded.

Mr. *Hume* meant to say, that, from the quarter through which he had received his intelligence, it was not impossible, but it might have originally proceeded from the hon. gent. himself.

Mr. *Pattison* requested the hon. Chairman to support him through this very *paradoxical* statement.

The hon. gent. said, "it was not impossible but the information might have been received through him," (Mr. Pattison)—now, as he had never known the hon. gent.; as he had never seen him, except in that Court, when he occupied their attention for about seven hours; as he had never particularly noticed him, except once, when he felt it his duty to call him to order; he thought it was highly indecorous, that he should impute to him any participation in this singular transaction. It was a perfect *paradox*; and, after

having heard so many from the hon. gentleman, he congratulated him on this last one, which was a *climax*.—*(Laughter.)*

Hon. Mr. *Elphinstone* spoke to order.—The subject before the Court was of the utmost importance, and gentlemen ought to confine themselves to it.

Mr. *Hume* appealed to the Court, whether any thing irregular which had passed, was not occasioned by the conduct of the hon. gent.—(Mr. Pattison).

Sir *Hugh Inglis* said, that the hon. Proprietor (Mr. Hume) had, by implication, thrown out a hint, that it was not impossible that his information had come from his (Sir H. Inglis's) hon. friend—and it was right that he should justify himself from the imputation—he (Sir H. Inglis) did not believe that the information did come from that gent.; but from the same quarter which had afforded the hon. Proprietor (Mr. Hume) those particulars which he had detailed to the Court on a former day.

Mr. *Howarth* (M. P.) said, that the present was one of the most interesting subjects that could possibly come under their consideration; and he felt that it was utterly impossible, from one short reading of that Petition, which contained not only matter important to their inter-

ests, but to the general interests of the Country, for any individual to agree immediately in the propriety of all its parts. He was sorry to observe, that an hon. Proprietor (Mr. Trower) in the course of a speech, which certainly displayed great eloquence, had introduced topics which he thought had better been avoided—he knew no purpose which such language, levelled at His Majesty's Ministers, could answer, except to excite greater opposition against the Company, than they at present experienced—but he felt convinced, that neither the public clamours without doors, nor the clamours within, would influence the government in the conclusion to which they would ultimately come—it was his firm hope and belief, that the question would be decided, not according to the selfish interests of any body of men, but on the general principles of national good—another hon. Proprietor (Mr. Smith) had desired them to come to a speedy decision, lest their enemies should make head against them—but he, on the contrary, would say—" if your cause be good, call on your enemies to bring forward all their force—let them advance with all their powers—let them make their utmost efforts—that, in the end, you may prove the justice of your claims superior to all the opposition of your adversaries."—*(Hear ! hear !)*—He merely rose

to make his claim, like other Proprietors, to have a due time allowed for consideration, on one of the most important questions that ever was agitated before them—the Petition was extremely complete in its nature, and, therefore, he trusted sufficient delay would be granted for a proper examination of it. This was more regular, and would have a much better effect, than if they came to a premature decision.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* then put the question, "that the farther consideration of the Petitions be adjourned till Tuesday next;" at the same time, he thought it was but justice to the gentlemen behind the bar, to state, that they had considered the subject maturely, and there was no hesitation on their parts to come to a decision then; in deference, however, to the opinions of the Proprietors, they readily agreed to the proposed delay.

The motion was then agreed to.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* next observed, that the Court would please to recollect, that, when the letter from the Earl of Buckinghamshire was read on a former day, that nobleman referred the Company to the petitions which had been laid on the table of the House of Commons. In consequence of this reference the Committee of Correspondence had taken the substance of those petitions into their consideration, and had come to a report on

the subject—which report had met with the unanimous approbation of the Court of Directors. He might venture to speak of that report, not being one of the parties who drew it up, as a very able and luminous production. If the Court pleased, the letter which accompanied the report to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, and his answer to it, should be then read. As the report itself was of great length, and as it was now in the press, and would be ready for delivery on the following day, perhaps the Court would allow it to be read short.

The letters referred to, were then read at length, and the title of the report of the Committee of Correspondence, as was suggested by the hon. Chairman, was also read—(for which documents, see Appendix) — after which the Court adjourned to Friday, February 23.

FRIDAY, *February* 23, 1813.

The Minutes of the last Court having been read by the Clerk,

The Chairman *(Sir Hugh Inglis)* stated to the Proprietors that they were assembled to take into further consideration the petition agreed to by

the last Court. He had to inform them that there had been several alterations made in the Petition, which, the Directors hoped, would meet with their approbation. Those alterations were open to their arguments and suggestions, as they concerned a subject of such great and vital importance to their interests. He thought the Petition had better be read as it now stood, and the alterations would be pointed out as they occurred.

The Petition was then read; and before the alterations made in it, had been stated to the Court,

Mr. *Abel Chapman* rose. He said that the prayer of that Petition comprehended matter of so much importance to the Company and the empire at large, he hoped he might stand excused if he was not content to give a silent vote. The nature and importance of our possessions in India were particularly well known, not only to the gentlemen employed in the administration of its affairs—not only in earlier but in later times, but also to the honourable Proprietor (Mr. Hume) who had laid before the Proprietors his sentiments on the importance and the high advantages derived to this country from the present mode of directing the East-India establishment; they were, also, as well known to the natural enemies of this

country, if he might so call them, the French nation; that nation had frequently betrayed both envy and admiration at the value and importance of those possessions as they affected the affairs and the interests of England. On a particular occasion, when Lord Malmesbury was applied to by the French ambassador for the purpose of regulating some plans for the peace of Europe, that noble lord told the French minister it was impossible that Europe could enjoy peace whilst the French maintained possession of Holland, the Low Countries, and other territories, not the natural possession of that country. The answer his lordship obtained from that plenipotentiary was "my Lord, your empire in the East is so well governed and so admirably regulated that I must take the liberty of saying that I never saw a system of government established in the colonies of any nation at once so adapted for its own preservation and the advantage of the mother country."

So thoroughly did he (Mr. Chapman) agree in the justice of that observation of the French ambassador, that he thought it was impossible to make *any* alteration in the establishments of the India Company, without overturning the whole system. He would never consent that a single brick of the ancient aud venerable fabrick,

which had been raised by them at an expense of so much blood and treasure, should be removed ; because he was persuaded such a breach would thereby be made in its present sound structure, as it would be impossible ever to repair. He thought that that system which had answered all the purposes ever intended by it, and exceeded those ever hoped from it, ought to be preserved and maintained in every particle ; convinced as he was that any alteration in the old system would not only be destructive of the British empire in the East, but give birth to a train of evil consequences which it would be impossible for this country, with all the exertion of its wisdom and of its energy, to avert. It was a gratifying circumstance to reflect upon, that whilst Europe was ravaged with war, and all her nations shaken almost to the centre, the British empire in the East enjoyed a perfect tranquillity ; and this by the wisdom and sound policy of those who administered her affairs, whilst those advantages cost the mother country nothing to acquire or to maintain. When he beheld the vast importance of those services which the India Company had performed for the benefit of Great Britain, by their wise administration, he was impressed with admiration and wonder ; and he could not but entertain a confident hope that the English go-

vernment would not adopt any measure which would disappoint the Company of those strong claims upon its justice and its gratitude. By the wise administration established in India, the Company had secured a revenue to this country, the mention of which, a few days ago, he confessed excited in his mind a considerable degree of astonishment. They had secured an annual surplus revenue to the British empire of £1,500,000 sterling.

Considering, therefore, the advantages secured by the Company to the British Empire—considering how the administration of their affairs had been conducted, so as to meet with the approbation, not only of our own government, but even of foreign nations;—and considering the testimony even of those who appeared to be the enemies of the Company, all of which were in favour of the proposition he contended for, surely it would be highly impolitic for the Court to give its sanction not only as Proprietors of East-India stock, but as Englishmen, to *any* system which should tend to overturn so noble a fabric as that established by the East-India Company. For his own part, if the opening of the outports, as a measure of policy on the part of government, should be carried into execution, he was firmly persuaded that a more destructive measure could

not be resolved upon, not only as it related to the welfare of this country, but as it affected the security and the interests of the nation at large; and he was persuaded, if that measure were passed into a law, the security of India was not worth many years' purchase.—*(Hear! hear! hear!)* The Court and every man knew very well, that India was a remote part of the world. Revolutions might take place; counter-revolutions might follow; and the whole empire might be shaken to its centre, before even intelligence could be received in this country of what was passing: and the time was not very remote when this country was not a little alarmed as to the then existing state of affairs in India. We were very well assured that there was a powerful French faction in India, ready and willing to raise disaffection and foment faction; and eager to seize the first opportunity to ignite that inflammable feeling which their machinations had so industriously created. We all knew, from experience, that Buonaparte attempted to assail India, by the way of Egypt: nor was that a new idea; for he had borrowed it from Louis XIV. Now, if any commotion was to take place in India, could any man doubt that Buonaparte, as the governor of France, would be very ready to add fuel to the flame, and give

every succour in his power, either by way of Egypt or Persia? Were we not to look to such calamities? Were we not to look forward, anticipate, and provide against evils which common sense would tell us, must result from the dissolution of that unity in the Company's affairs, and that well-tempered dependance upon the British Crown? Were we not to derive wisdom from past experience, and avoid those *rocks* which had brought upon this country so many unfortunate consequences? If the trade to India —and if the government of the East-India Company was to be dissolved,—would any reasonable man hope, that an empire so large, and so distant from the mother-country, would not avail herself of the first pretext to shake off the British yoke? These, however, were not consequences that could ever be expected to follow, so long as the East-India Company was kept compact within itself;—so long as that wise system they established, could be maintained by their policy and their exertions, and so long as the Company could secure to the British government a ready and prompt allegiance to its crown and imperial dignity. It would indeed be blindness and folly if we were not to benefit a little by the dear-bought experience this country had acquired in somewhat similar occasions. For his own part,

he thought the short and simple interpretation of a request to open the trade to India was at once to deprive the India Company of all her political power; to tear asunder all those bonds by which the Empire in the East was secured to the British Crown; and, in short, to renew the old business of America. Surely, if these consequences were only to be *risked* by granting the prayer of the petitions of those who sought to encroach upon the privileges of the India Company;—if there was even only the *chance* of losing those valuable possessions, we should be equally unwise and unjust in hazarding such an experiment. It was in the memory of men now living, and, in fact, he himself knew the honourable officer who sat at the Board of Trade with himself, when the *Virginia* trade was settled, he meant General Oglethorpe. It was very well known that the trade to America for the purpose of bringing home to England the commodities of Virginia, was not carried on by British built ships, but by ships built in America. There were Virginia merchants now living who, as well as himself, remembered the whole of the Tobacco coming from Virginia in Virginia ships, and these ships were navigated, not by British seamen, but by native Americans; nor were British artificers employed in the construction of those vessels.

Now *that*, he feared, was the system that would be followed, in case of any alteration in the present trade to India; and he would venture to say, that, if the Outports were opened, if such should be the determination of the Legislature, the trade would not be carried on by the ships of those ports, but by ships built in India, manned by natives of the country, and sent to ports different from those established by Act of Parliament. — But he was persuaded that these important considerations would be seriously attended to by the government of the country, and he could not believe that the Parliament of the United Kingdom would, in its wisdom, entertain a proposition so pregnant with injury to the interests of the British empire. He had been told, within a few days past, what indeed he was not ignorant of before, that the Ministers of our country, from the nature of the Constitution, were obliged to hear all parties, and to hear objections and petitions, from whatsoever quarter they came. He did not question the liberality and the justice of that proposition: on the contrary, he hoped that all parties would be heard with that patience and attention which was the characteristic of the British Legislature; but at the same time, flattering himself that the Legislature would consider this question in the point of view in which

it had been considered by this Court, he could not but be sorry that those gentlemen who had determined to leave their homes, and come up to London upon a subject of so much importance, to see their favourite measure carried into execution, had done so without considering, that the safety of the whole empire was involved in a compliance with their wishes. There were reasons which moved him to a conviction of the impolicy, and even the madness of such a measure; and being so impressed he could not content himself with a silent vote. Experience persuaded him, that if the shipping interest of India was properly attended to, so as to be connected with this country, to be manned by British seamen, and to become *British* in every respect, this country never could want a naval force amply competent to enable her to carry on the great undertakings in which she was necessarily engaged. Under such regulations they would add strength and solidity to the power of the British arms. But if these ships employed in the Indian trade were suffered to come from India to our outports with *native* seamen, the object of the measure under consideration would not be *British*, and therefore ought not to be carried into a law.—(*Hear! hear!*)—He begged pardon for having trespassed so long

upon the attention of the Court, and he besought their indulgence, not only as he felt the importance of the subject, but as he was little in the habit of public speaking. Indeed he was more indebted to their considerate feeling towards him, because this question had been argued and discussed by men of the first rate abilities—by many honourable and learned gentlemen now in his eye; and as they had said so much, and that so well, he could not flatter himself with the hope of saying any thing worthy the particular attention of the Court.—(*Hear! hear!*)—But as far as related to the great bearing of the question, his sentiments upon it were contained in a very short sentence, which was, "that he was persuaded the security of India would be lost to the mother country if any alteration was adopted in the government of Indian affairs." He would not dwell upon a more enlarged exposition of the reasons he had for entertaining such an opinion: persuaded, however, he was, that all the commercial advantages which this country enjoyed by the present system of government in India would be utterly lost; and any attempt to seek larger advantages by a more extended commerce than now held with India, would be risking the certainty of a *permanent*, for the mere chance of a *temporary* benefit. *Temporary* he called it; be-

cause he was afraid, for the reasons he had stated, the British power in that distant quarter of the world, would be lost. If a communication to India for the private merchants was opened, in proportion as that communication was widened, in the same proportion would the security of our India possessions become precarious. The reason why we owed our present security in that country to the India Company was obviously, because the communication between Great Britain and India was carried on through the Company, and because it could not be carried on by any other legal means. In that view of the question, he begged leave to say, that it was not for the Court of Proprietors to facilitate the progress of Indian *independence*, which would be the inevitable consequence if they were to lend their countenance to any alteration in the present system. They ought to guard, and *jealously* guard, against any disobedience, to the sovereignty of this country in India—they ought to be watchful of a strict obedience to the laws enacted under the protection and countenance of the British Government. If the Americans had not become a mercantile people, which gave occasion to their having a mercantile navy; and if that mercantile navy had not been turned into a *political* navy, which was done, and which nothing could pre-

vent, we should not this day have to deplore the loss of those settlements, nor would America possess that political independence which she is now able to exert against the parent country. He therefore thought that the safety of the British empire in India depended upon the East-India Company's remaining *compacted* and *united* within itself, as it had done for centuries; and he again said, that if the British legislature could consent to lay open the trade in the manner now sought by the petitioners to Parliament, they would annihilate, not only the commerce, but the politics of the British empire in India. Beside the revenue which the India Company ordinarily collected, they had a surplus revenue, notwithstanding the increasing difficulties which they had to encounter, of £1,500,000. In adddition to these advantages, they had established a nursery of seamen, which was the great bulwark of the state; and also, that they had a net revenue of £500,000 per annum. Were not these objects worthy the attention of the British legislature? Were they not too important to lose without a *struggle* at least for their security. Firmly was he persuaded, that if the government laid the *whole* of the trade open they would lose the *whole*: beside which, they would lose India in a very short time; and, for his own part, he would give but a very few years

purchase for it. It was on that principle, and not with a view to any private advantages, that the East-India Proprietors could derive from the continuance of the trade to India, that he opposed any alteration in the system. Even Mr. Adam Smith, with all his ability, could not judge of the calculations of the trade and commerce of the East-India Company with India. But *they* knew from experience what the system of affairs in India was—*they* knew the advantages of it to the British nation; and, in the prayer of the Company's Petition to Parliament, it was only desired that the Legislature would let the system remain as it now stood, with such alterations as they in their wisdom thought proper to make, with respect to *the regulation of the trade*, without losing sight of the great object at stake. It was by no means a hazardous statement for him to make, when he asserted that the moment an alteration took place in the East-India government, from that moment that Empire would be lost to the mother country. For, in speaking of the French nation, we were all aware with what a jealous eye they looked at our extensive empire in the East; and we all knew how anxious the tyrant of France would be to participate in that glorious system established by this country in India, and acquire dominion in that valuable territory. Every one knew that "ships,

"colonies, and commerce," were what the French wanted; and he was persuaded, from the experience this country had had of the designs of that usurper, if it were possible for this country to set *toe* to *toe* with him, he would go back to his ancient limits, if we would give him a firm footing in India. It was in this point of view, therefore, that he thought this country ought to look with a jealous eye to the security of India; a measure which could only be permanently effected by the continuance of the present system of government in that country, but which, he feared, would be immediately risked by an opposite line of conduct. Could it be said that this was a matter of mere *commercial* arrangement when, in fact, it concerned the policy, the commerce, and all the real interests of the country? He affirmed that the commercial and political relations of the East-India Company were so intimately united and interwoven with each other, that it was impossible to shake the one without losing the other.—*(Hear! hear!)* The liberty he had thus taken of delivering his sentiments at so much length, he hoped would be excused. He felt that an apology was due to the Court; but he was so deeply impressed with the importance of the question, he could not help yielding to the persuasion, that he ought not to give a silent vote. There was, how-

ever, one other observation with which he would trouble the Court, because he thought it was of importance, when coupled with the more imperious arguments upon this subject. The East-India Company had a population in India, at this time, of 20,000 inhabitants. Every one who knew India, knew that a very free and unrestrained intercourse took place between the sexes. The consequence was, that the population multiplied in a surprising degree; and hence it followed, that every spring, the schools, in and round London, were filled with the youth of that country, who were brought to England to receive their education. When these young people went back, they called themselves Englishmen, and claimed all the privileges of British subjects. With such opinions and notions as these, was it too much to say, that these men, so educated, would in a little time feel themselves disposed to entertain the same sentiments as the Americans? At least, with the woeful experience we had had of the consequence of sentiments of the same kind in that country, we ought to avoid every step that might tend to realize such alarms for the safety of our East-Indian possessions—we ought to bear in prospect the example of America—and we ought, with every barrier in our power, to avert a similar catastrophe in the East. It was matter of great satisfaction

to him, that this important subject was not to be decided hastily and unadvisedly. This was not the last occasion upon which the claims of the East-India Company would be discussed; and he anticipated with confidence, that the wisdom of Parliament would not only find it *politic* but *just*, to confirm those claims to those who had so long approved themselves worthy of their trust. Viewing, therefore, with jealousy, the attempts made to counteract the calls of justice and of gratitude, he would certainly vote for the prayer of the Petition.—(*Hear! hear!*)

Mr. *Hoare* said he by no means wished to trespass upon the attention of the Court; but he submitted, under the correction of the chair, that the course of the proceedings this day was hitherto rather irregular. The Court was informed from the Chair, that the Petition adopted by the last Court had undergone some alterations. The Petition having, as he apprehended, been read for the purpose of having those alterations pointed out; but that not having been yet done, he thought the honourable Proprietor who spoke last was a little irregular in delivering his sentiments before any question was delivered from the Chair, and before the proper subject of this day's discussion was stated to the Court. He submitted, therefore, that it would have been more regular for the ho-

nourable Proprietor to have waited until the alterations were read, and the question put therefrom upon from the Chair.

Mr. *Abel Chapman* said he thought this was an adjourned debate.

Mr. *Hoare* suggested, that the Petition which had just been read having been discussed and approved of at the last Court, there could be no new subject of debate before the Court until the alterations were read. It would be perfectly proper for the honourable Proprietor to deliver his sentiments upon the amendments, when the question should be put; but not having been put, he would take the liberty of saying that the more regular course would be to wait for the question.

The *Chairman* said he certainly did state, as the honourable Proprietor, who spoke last, had mentioned, that there weresome alterations made in the Petition since the last Court. He had now, however, to observe, that the alterations were inconsequential as to the great points in agitation, and were rather of a clerical nature. The most material one would now be read.

Mr. *Smith* (Solicitor to the Company) then stated, that the alterations made in the Petition were of a trifling nature, and that the main alteration was in that paragraph of the Petition which respected the expences of the Company in its mili-

tary operations and its forces in India. This was the only material one in the Petition.

The *Chairman* insisted, that the alteration now stated would be deemed by the Court to be an improvement in the Petition; because it stated a fact which was of considerable importance, and noted what they (the proprietors) had given up for national purposes. The question he would therefore put was, "that this alteration stand part of this Petition."

Mr. *Hume* then rose; concurring, as he certainly did, in the greatest part of the prayer of the Petition which had been just read, he should be extremely sorry to detain the Court unnecessarily on the present occasion; but as he was convinced that it would be the wish, as well of those within the bar, as of those without the bar, that a Petition of so much importance to the general interests, not only of the Company but of the public, should go from hence as perfect as it could be made, he hoped the Court would excuse him for a few moments, whilst he stated what appeared to him to require some further consideration, and which he thought might be attended with good effects if altered as he should propose. After recapitulating the history of the Company from the earliest period of its establishment down to the present moment, which he

thought was perfectly right and just, the words of the Petition were these: "That your Petitioners are ready to become parties to any arrangement which shall be consistent with the rights of your Petitioners, and the security of British India."—No words, he thought, could be more proper than those used in that part of the Petition, because it was leaving to the justice of the Legislature (which, indeed, he ventured before to suggest) every thing that might be useful and advantageous to the country, consistent with the rights of both parties. Anxious, therefore, that that should stand as part of the Petition, he begged leave to call the attention of the Court to the two subsequent paragraphs. The first* was that which the Court stated, that the only resources which

* To understand the honourable gentleman's allusion correctly, it will be necessary to quote the whole paragraph alluded to, from the Petition itself.

"Your Petitioners ask not for an *exclusive trade* upon the narrow principles of monopoly for the mere purpose of commercial gain. They have under their care interests of a more extended and liberal nature, which it is their duty to attend to. Your Petitioners are ready to become parties to any arrangements which shall be consistent with the rights of your Petitioners, and the security of British India, *and which will not deprive your Petitioners of the means of fulfilling their pecuniary engagements with the public or individuals:* or the performance of the functions which may be continued or allotted to them."

the Company could depend upon with a view of paying the interests of their debts, consisted merely of their profits in trade. Now he submitted to the consideration of the Court whether the observation of the honourable Chairman at the last meeting, "that there was a surplus revenue of one million and a half per annum, and that revenue might be expected to increase," was at all consistent with the statement in the Petition, that the resources of the Company depended only upon its profits in trade. He did not like this sort of statement, when the Court had the means of putting the matter out of all doubt; because it was calculated to mislead the world into a belief that the Company had nothing to depend upon but their profits in trade. This was certainly an objection which he would wish to have answered or obviated. The second point to which he alluded as objectionable in the Petition, and which he hoped would be altered or left out, was that paragraph wherein the Court stated, "your Petitioners submit, that they would not be justified in becoming parties to any system which, on consideration, should appear to them likely to prove an illusion." Now, he certainly expected that this would have been one of the alterations made in the Petition, but he was sorry to find that these words were still continued.

The *Chairman* here begged to state a very few words upon the subject of the objection taken to this part of the Petition by the honourable Proprietor. He believed, that with respect to those words now alluded to, the Court of Directors had no very great desire themselves to retain them in the Petition, if it should be the *wish of the Proprietors* themselves, to have them omitted. From what had passed in the Court of Directors, he believed he was warranted in saying this, but in order to their being removed he apprehended it could only be done by an expressed resolution of the Court of Proprietors.

Mr. *Hume* resumed. He said, he was extremely unwilling to detain the Court unnecessarily; but he trusted it would appear to them that the expressions used in that part of the Petition did put the Court in a very different situation from that which they ought to maintain on this important occasion; and that whatever might be the result of the investigation of the Legislature into this subject, the Court having pledged themselves to nothing, he was convinced that nothing, which they had the power to adopt as well as to reject, would be submitted to them by the Legislature. But here the Petition appeared to be begging conclusions; and he would here, by the way, take the liberty of asking, what it was the

Court meant by "their not becoming parties to any system which, upon consideration, should appear to them an illusion?" He wished to know what was that system of illusion which the Petition spoke of, and to which the Company would not become a party? Because he thought it involved a question of very great difficulty and invidious meaning, and feeling that objections might be taken to it by those who were not the friends of the Company, he would suggest the expediency of leaving it out, with a view to avoid all kinds of cavil on the part of those to whom the Petition might be referred. There was likewise another part of the Petition which he thought was at variance with the statutes, which gave the East India Company a right to their present Charter. The words of the Petition to which he alluded were these: "Your Petitioners humbly submit that it cannot be contended that any persons can have a right, except, with the consent of your Petitioners, to use the settlements, factories, and seats of trade in India, and so forth." Now, if the enactments of the 32d of Geo. II. were correct, they went to this, "that on the termination of the Company's exclusive right to trade with India, the subjects of His Majesty should have a right to trade in common with others of his subjects to India." These were the words of the

statute; and if the subjects of His Majesty were to have the right to trade in common to India after the expiration of the Company's Charter, although the right to trade exclusively was continued to the Company, still the ultimate right remained in the whole body of the British people. He therefore could not help considering that the retention of these words was impolitic, because it was advisable to obviate every possible source of adverse opinion upon this subject, when it came to be discussed elsewhere. Besides this precaution, as it respected the present objection, might be very safely taken, as it did appear to him that the words were quite unnecessary.

Another part of the Petition he thought required some explanation, and he trusted, in taking this exception to the Petition, the Court would be satisfied that his sole object in at present troubling them, was to remove all obstacles to an unanimity of sentiment upon this great question. He was not aware of any document before the public upon which it could be shewn that the statement in page 17 of the Petition, "that the net produce by trade, exclusive of all collateral objects and payments of dividends amounting to six millions and odd thousands pounds," was correct. This statement of so enormous a sum might give rise to considerable objections as to

its truth, unless it was sustained by some unquestionable documents; because, by the documents which had been laid before the public in 1810, and subsequent to that period, the nett produce of the Company's trade, exclusive of the usual deductions, did not exceed £1,535,308. Instead of the statement in the Petition being confined to any thing like that sum, the Petition roundly asserted that the nett produce of their trade is considerably upwards of £6,000,000, making the enormous surplus, over and above the last accounts laid before the public, to amount to upwards of four millions. Now, for his own part, he was unable to account for this extraordinary increase; and he should be happy to have some explanation upon the subject, unintelligible as it was at present; because he thought that whatever the Court asserted in the Petition, they ought to be prepared to prove and testify by the most satisfactory evidence. Now with a view of shewing how necessary it was for the Court to be on its guard against stating what it would not be able to prove, he would take the liberty of producing part of the VIIIth Report, which had been published a few days before; he meant the Report of the Secret Committee of Correspondence. It was not now necessary for him to enter into a particular investigation of the contents of

that report, or to point out those facts stated in it, which he conceived could not be supported; but he would take *one fuct* as an instance, to shew the propriety of the observation he had made, which he was convinced the Court would admit as a fact that was extremely strong. The circumstance he alluded to was contained under the third head of objections which had been made against the Renewal of the Company's Charter. The Committee had stated, under the third head of those objections, "that, notwithstanding the increase of the Company's territories, their trade has decreased, though protected from enemies and hostile rivalry." In answer to this, the Company had declared in the same Report, "that it was not true that their commerce had decreased, although their sales had fallen off in some years by the exclusion of British commerce from the European continent." Now this denial on the part of the Company was a direct contradiction to the Petitions before the House of Commons, and it would be highly incumbent on the Company that this fact should be cleared up by unquestionable evidence; but he was afraid that the facts were in direct opposition to the Report of the Secret Committee; for if he took the account of the returns for the last seventeen years of the prime cost of East-India

goods sent to England, and divided that period into two parts, it would be found on a comparison of the first period and the last, including the intermediate years, that a vast decrease appeared in the trade of the Company. The hon. Proprietor here contrasted the accounts of the two periods, from which, he said it appeared, that, during the last eight years, a decrease of *three millions and upwards* had taken place in the trade of the Company, and that it was very little short of half a million per annum during that period. Now, he said, the object of his noticing this was for the purpose of shewing the necessity of accuracy on the part of the Court, and the folly of stating any items in their Petition and of sending forth any fact to the world that they should not be able to prove. Therefore if the reports furnished upon this subject proved the fact he now stated (and certainly he had no reason to disbelieve the statement so made); if it was clear that, during the period of the last eight years, there was an annual decrease in the Company's trade of £500,000, he submitted, whether the Committee, in giving this fact to the world, acted prudently in drawing the attention of the public to a point unsupported by evidence, which could only submit their Petition to the cavils of those who might be naturally expected

to throw obstacles by every mode they could, in the way of the Company's Petition. But thinking that the Committee must have taken into their view the Indian and China trade together, he naturally adverted to the prime cost of the Indian goods and the Chinese goods, during the same two periods. He thereby found that upon a contrast between these two periods, there was an increase of one million and odd thousand pounds in the amount of the Chinese goods at prime cost, beyond what the state of that trade was during the first eight years; and if he deducted that from the *decrease* of the Bengal trade, during the last eight years, he would find that there was a difference of somewhere about two million six hundred thousand and odd hundred pounds, being an annual decrease of about £300,000. He noticed these points with a view of shewing how necessary it was that the Court should be prepared to shew the statement of the fact in their Petition, that the increase of the trade amounted to upwards of £6,000,000 was well founded in truth. They should be prepared to sustain a statement of this kind by satisfactory evidence, but he was not aware of any documents before the public which warranted such an assertion; and if the Court could not prove that the statement was correct, he should beg leave to

move that the item in question should be left out of the petition; and that there should be substituted in its stead, a mere *general* statement, "that there had been profit," without pledging the Court to any specific sum. This he suggested simply for the purpose of avoiding any objection that might be taken, by those who were not friends to the Company, to this point, and that the Company might not commit themselves in the public estimation.

Having thus trespassed so long upon the time of the Court, he should trouble them with few farther observations. He was anxious to answer some objections of the honourable Proprietor who first spoke; and he hoped the Court would excuse him for a few moments whilst he called their attention to those objections. He was the more desirous of doing so because the subject before the Court was of the greatest importance; and, as it involved a great variety of considerations, it could not be too fully discussed before the Petition went into the world. It seemed to him, the honourable Proprietor's motive for deciding upon this question was rather an extraordinary one. If he remembered correctly, his declaration was, "that such was his veneration for the system and establishments in India, that he was unwilling to meddle with, or touch a single brick in any

part of the building, even if the change was to be effected with advantage—he was against all changes whatsoever."

Mr. *Abel Chapman* begged pardon for interrupting the honourable gentleman; but he must excuse him if he denied having said any such thing as that now imputed to him.

Mr. *Hume* resumed:—The honourable gentleman's words were these: "He was averse to all kinds of changes; and that he would not give any permission to any alteration in the present establishment of the East-India Company."

Now, he would submit to the Court, whether they would adopt a proposition which signified, that whatever might be the situation of the establishments of the East-India Company—however imperfect it might become, either from the effects of time or the natural degeneracy to which all human institutions were subject; still, no changes were to be effected, whatever advantage they might produce even to the concerns of the Company themselves. Surely this was so unreasonable a doctrine, that it was impossible it could be seriously entertained in a discussion of this nature. There was no institution of human erection free from some kind of imperfection; and in which there was not always room for amendment, however perfect it might be. But to hold out

that no alterations or amendments could be safely made in the present institution, would be to contend that error and imperfection ought to become the objects of our veneration.

Another point of the honourable Proprietor's speech he must also object to; namely, his observations with respect to the Indian seas. He professed he could not conceive upon what principle an honourable gentleman in this Court could object to the system upon which the communication was kept up between this Country and America previous to the secession of that country from the British Crown. He had not now with him the authority upon which he replied to the statement of the honourable Proprietor; but he would find that the commerce and navigation carried on between the American colonies and this counrry before that period, were carried on by ships belonging to America, and manned by American seamen, and not at all by English ships manned with English seamen. However, he thought it necessary to notice the honourable gentleman's observation, for the purpose of shewing, that whilst Great Britain at this moment was using every exertion to man her navy, and to supply her fleets with the necessary complement of men, the honourable gentleman made use of an argument which was incompatible with the security and

advantage of that country, he was so solicitous should derive benefit from her intercourse with her East-Indian colonies. It certainly did appear strange to him that the honourable gentleman should propose that the Indian fleets should be navigated by British seamen at a time when the supply of sailors was by no means commensurate with our wants. For his own part, he no necessity of employing British seamen in carrying home the East-Indian commerce during a time of war and a scarcity of seamen, when the subjects and the inhabitants of India could equally serve the purposes of the Company; he was to consider that the great advantage which the India Company was to derive through the medium of its Charter, sprung from its commerce; and he really did not see what difference it could make to them whether their ships were navigated by native Indians or British seamen, provided they could get their cargoes home. He should be sorry to think that this country could be excluded from the use of her own subjects, and be compelled, as she certainly would be in that case, to employ subjects of a hostile power. But the fact really was, that a very small portion indeed of British seamen were employed in navigating the Indian fleets. The greater part of their crews being made up of native Indians and foreign sea-

men; which, however, never could be the case, were we not obliged, from necessity, to employ our own subjects in more important occupations. Before he sat down, he would propose to the Court an amendment, which he hoped some honourable gentleman would do him the favour to second, which was,—to leave out those words to which he had, in the beginning of his speech, called the attention of the Court; and if the Court was not able to explain the amount of the six millions' odd hundred thousand pounds, stated in the Petition to be the profit of the Company's trade, he should likewise move, that that sum should be left out, and a mere general statement of profit substituted in its stead. For the present he was unwilling to trouble the Court any longer; and he would only request the question to be put from the Chair upon his amendments.

The *Chairman* begged to be informed by the honourable Proprietor, whether he (the Chairman) properly collected his amendments, which he now proposed to stand as follows:—In page 17 of the Petition, instead of the amount of profits being stated at £6,289,405, it should be generally stated, "*Profit.*" Secondly, in page 20 of the Petition, the following words should be left out:—"Your petitioners submit, that they would not be justified in becoming parties to any

system which, on consideration, would be likely to prove an illusion:" and thirdly, in the 22d page of the Petition, to leave out the words, "Your petitioners submit, that it cannot be contended that any persons can have a right, except with the consent of your petitioners, to use the settlements, factories or seats of trade, &c." These, he understood, were the only amendments the honourable Proprietor wished to have made in the Petition. However, he should inform the honourable gentleman that, in the first instance, in point of form, he should move his first resolution.

Mr. *Hume* said the Chairman had stated his objections very correctly; and he concluded by moving that the words to which he objected in the 20th page should be left out.

The *Chairman* said he understood that that was the honourable gentleman's *second* resolution, and not his *first*.

Mr. *Hume* said he would wish it to stand as his *first*.

Mr. *Abel Chapman*, in explanation to the observations of the honourable gentleman who spoke last, said he had to regret that the honourable Proprietor should have so far mistaken what he (Mr. Chapman) had said, as to suppose that he meant to contend that any system should be so perfect as not to require emendation, or be

open to inquiry on the part of those who might suppose there was room for improvement. So far was he from entertaining such an opinion, that he admitted the Gothic superstructure of the constitution of England itself, perfect as it was in all its parts (and indeed so perfect did he think it to be, that he was of opinion it merely required due attention to be paid to its operations and movements to make it the most perfect system of government it was possible for human wisdom to invent), was open to amendment and improvement. He was not so sanguine in his views of that constitution as to suppose that the system was so perfect that no alteration whatever could could be made in it with advantage at no time nor season; nor did he contend that the system of administration of the Company's affairs in India was so perfect as not to be open to alteration and improvement. The Company were now going to Parliament with a Petition to have their Charter renewed. Many alterations might be made suitable, but not inconsistent with the system of administration established in India. No man, he believed, who knew any thing of human institutions, could suppose that the constitution of the Company was so complete in all its parts as not to admit of alteration and improvement; but the question was, whether the alterations sought

by the petitioners of Parliament against the Company would not, instead of improving, utterly annihilate the British power in India. He admitted that, by some regulations which the wisdom of Parliament might suggest with a view to open the trade to private merchants, might be attended with advantage. Regulations might be adopted of this nature, which might do no serious harm to the interests of the Company; but he would go the length of saying, that the constitution of the India Company could not with safety be altered. Now, with respect to the honourable Proprietor's observations touching the carrying-trade between America and England, that was a subject upon which he happened to be very familiar, having been in America, and having had an opportunity of observing that branch of commerce at the period of which he spoke.

Mr. *Hume* here attempted to interpose and explain the ground upon which he had objected to the honourable gentleman's observations; but was called to order by the Chairman, who requested that the honourable gentleman, who was in possession of the Court, might be suffered to continue his explanation.

Mr. *Chapman* then resumed his explanation.—He said that so far as related to America, he had to observe that when the commerce and trade of

this country to America was opened to the outports, it was thought that the commerce would be attended with very great advantage to England: but the consequence of that measure was that the commerce which had been hitherto carried on in British bottoms was carried on in American built ships manned by American people; the effect of which was, that the Americans became the carriers between the two countries. He would take the liberty of stating, that he now knew an elderly gentleman living in London, and who was a Virginia merchant at the time the trade to Virginia was carried on in British bottoms, and he was positively assured from that gentleman—indeed he knew it from other very good authority, that when that trade was opened the whole advantage of it accrued to the American people. Great Britain beheld in the event of the fatal American war the consequence of that policy. America, by being thus suffered to become the carriers to England, built a powerful shipping, which from a commercial navy was afterwards converted into a political navy. Feeling so strongly as he did upon this subject, he would not hesitate to say, that the same consequences that took place in America would ensue in India if the trade was opened to the outports into the Indian seas. The same symptoms which

indicated a separation between America and England would surely follow such a step with respect to India. By opening the trade to the outports, ships of great force would be built in India, which upon an emergency could be converted into a political navy and applied to the purposes, which he feared would be engendered in the minds of those who felt themselves so far from home and out of the reach of controul from the mother country. This was by no means a chimerical notion; for, he would ask, was there any thing different in the feelings and sentiments of human nature in the East from what they were in the West? Suppose a similar disposition broke out in India, to that which finally triumphed in America, how was it possible for this country with the utmost efforts of her strength to repress insurrection and revolutionary tumult in a quarter of the world so distant from Europe? Did not the history of man, in all ages, times and countries, shew that he was fond of power and would use it, if he could by any possibility attain the object of his wishes? He hesitated not to the clare, that the moment there was a free and open commerce between England and India, a pretence would be sought to shake off the power of the mother country; and he predicted with confidence that those ships which were built for

commercial purposes, would be converted into ships of war. But he could not suppose that the foresight of Parliament could be so blinded as not to consider these important views of the question and not adopt such remedies as would put out of question the identity of India with the power of the British empire.

He requested pardon for having trespassed at such length in explanation; and threw himself on the indulgent consideration of the Court. *(Hear! hear! hear!)*

The *Chairman* begged to attract the attention of the Court to the hon. gentleman's (Mr. Hume) objection, which formed the subject of his present amendment. "I shall," said he, "confine myself to one observation on the point now under the consideration of the Court; namely to the amendment of the hon. gentleman, whose speech of this day, is entitled to the respect of every body present. The hon. gentleman proposes that we should omit (I am not exactly correct perhaps in reciting the precise words), "we are not justified in becoming parties to any system (mark what follows) which, *upon consideration*, should appear to the petitioners likely to prove an illusion."—If I thought there was any thing repugnant in this declaration—any thing that manifested a disposition on the part of the Directors and of

this Court;—any thing hostile to an agreement with the Ministers of government—any thing which could throw an impediment in the way of a liberal view of this question, or thwart an investigation into the Company's claims, I should be of opinion that those words ought to be disclaimed; but it appears to me that there is something *conciliatory* rather than *hostile* in the expressions, because, in my judgment, they manifest a disposition to meet the Ministers as far as they can be met upon principles consistent with the security of this establishment: and therefore when the Directors or when the Company came to the resolution of stating, "that they will not consent to become parties to any thing that appears like an illusion," they appear to me merely to assert that which they think to be correct. If the Court of Directors and of Proprietors think this *is* an illusion, why are they by a total silence to imply that it *is not?* when this matter becomes the subject of explanation, it will be then time enough for the Company to state wherein what they think the illusion consists, and why they will not consent to become a party to any measure which, upon consideration, shall appear to promote it. These are the simple grounds upon which it does appear to me, the proposition of the hon. gentleman can be main-

tained; I am not aware that the hon. gentleman's amendment has yet been seconded.

Mr. *Rock* begged pardon for not having before this time seconded the motion of Mr. Hume, which he would have done as soon as it had been made by that hon. gentleman, but for the obtrusion of other objects upon the attention of the Court. He would now however second the motion, because he thought he saw a disposition on the other side of the bar, to retain words in the Petition, which might subject the claims of the Company to cavil and objection, from a quarter perhaps the most fatal to their views. He conjured the Court to recollect that they were going to Parliament in opposition to the declaration to His Majesty's Ministers. It would be advisable therefore for the Court if possible to come to an unanimous resolution upon this subject. If the words now proposed to be left out of the Petition by the hon. mover, were still to be retained, notwithstanding what the Court had heard in objection to them, he, for one, must conscientiously refuse his assent to the Petition altogether; for he would never agree in a Petition to Parliament, which contained a determination on the part of the Company, of the nature now pointed out, nor would he give his voice in favor of a proposition to continue the government of

India in its present form, if he thought there was any disposition in the Company, to reject all propositions for opening the India trade to the Outports. Besides this objection to the Petition, he would venture to state, that some of the allegations contained in it had not been proved. He alluded to the declaration upon the subject of the state of the Company's trade. It was not made out upon satisfactory evidence that the Company were carrying on the trade to the extent averred in the Petition. However, with respect to the other objection, unless the words alluded to were left out he should feel himself obliged to give his negative to the Petition.—He saw no reason for keeping them in, as the Chairman had said they were of no importance.

Mr. *Parnther* said, that if he thought there was any thing contained in the Petition, which was calculated to interrupt the unanimity which, for every reason, ought to prevail in the opinions of the Court, he should not be disposed to oppose the amendment now proposed by the honorable gentleman. But if he conceived the real meaning of the words to be that which he understood the honorable gentleman had put upon them, namely—should government establish something contrary to those words, the Company, therefore,

were not to go on with the government of affairs in India; most undoubtedly he should be for excluding the proposition from the Petition; but he understood, the declaration conveyed in those words, meant only, that they would not be privy, or become parties in any way whatever, to the institution of a system, which they thought would turn out to be an illusion. If they had so explicitly declared their opinion, and if government chose to institute another system, was there any thing in those words which made it inconsistent with the duty of this Court to become the supporters of that system, if Parliament thought it right to form a new one; or such as should be different from that by which India was at present governed? If the system offered was a bad one, doubtless the Company must make the best of it; but, if they thought that system so bad as to be completely inadmissible, he would submit that the Court was perfectly justified in making such a declaration; but that declaration did not necessarily infer that the Court would not accede to the terms proposed by Parliament.

Viewing, therefore, the words in that sense, he thought they ought to stand in the Petition unaltered.—*(Hear! hear! hear!)* He could not help saying, that if there was any thing which

could make that opinion stronger in his mind, it was because there was nothing contained in the Petition which was not the opinion of the most enlightened men; and he would venture to say, that there was nothing in that opinion which would not do honour and add greater dignity to that situation in which those enlightened men were placed. The subject could not have been placed in better hands, because it came from those who were thoroughly acquainted with the whole system and the whole policy of affairs in British India; and considering that declaration as coming from the clearest conviction, and the most solemn argument, "that it would be an illusion," he could not but feel that it was highly important those words should be retained. He gave them credit for that declaration; and in so doing, he thought it would be highly improper and indeed preposterous, that the declaration of those men, who had the best means of forming a conclusion upon the subject, should be excluded from the Petition to Parliament. He therefore, for one, should vote for the continuance of the words.

The *Chairman* again addressed the Court. He said the hon. gentleman who had seconded the motion, had alluded to what he observed early in

the debate. Certainly he did state that the words were of no very great importance; but, as they had been placed in, the Court of Directors did not think they ought to be left out; without the sentiments of the Court of Proprietors expressed their dissent to them. The words objected to were these: "Your petitioners submit that they would not be justified in becoming parties to any system, which, *on consideration*, should appear to them likely to prove an illusion."

Now, by these words, he submitted, the Company had left an opportunity open for the most ample discussion of their affairs; and they had also left themselves free to adopt any measure which did not appear to be inconsistent with their interests. By these words the Company were bound to nothing: and he would ask the hon. gentlemen who moved for leaving them out, whether they would have the Company become parties to any system which they were convinced, after fair consideration, would prove illusive? He hoped not. He thought it necessary for his own justification, and for the justification of the Court, to express his sentiments; and he begged pardon for having again obtruded himself on their attention.

Mr. *Rock* said he certainly wished the Court

to be unanimous in their Petition: and nothing would be more desirable to him than the exclusion of every thing which might give rise to a difference of opinion. He wished, therefore, to understand what the Court alluded to, when it said it would not become a party to any system which they thought an illusion? What system was it?—what was the system they conceived to be illusory?

Sir *Theophilus Metcalfe* said, that in consequence of the conduct of the honorable Proprietor, who spoke last, he could have expected no less than the line of conduct he was pleased to adopt this day. With respect to the words proposed to be left out, by that honourable Proprietor (Mr. Hume) he had thought that they were of so little importance that if the objection to them had originated in any other quarter than that from which the opposition now came, he could not conceive that the Company would have any objection to leave them out: but when the Court considered that the hon. Proprietor had displayed remarkable talents and abilities on this great question, and that he had stood forward with a degree of singularity upon this subject; that he seemed disposed to question every statement of the Company's affairs; that he was always ready to occupy the time of the

Court in reading papers, and raising difficulties, he did not think it very regular now for the hon. gentleman after so many opportunities of discussing the Petition, to find fault with its construction: and hence, he said, the Court would not be surprized if, upon all these considerations, he should think the hon. gentleman's objection so little deserving consideration. Every man must confess the difficulty of framing a Petition so as to bear the scrutinizing examination to which that honorable Proprietor wished to subject this. It could not be expected that any Petition, however free from exception, would meet the ideas of every man. The most that could be expected was, that a general Petition should be drawn up and submitted to the Court of Proprietors for them to judge of its merits. Such a Petition had been drawn up and submitted to the Proprietors, who were all pleased to approve it, with the exception of one individual; and he thought it would be admitted to him that the fair sense of the Court had been taken upon the subject.—*(Hear! hear! hear!)* But yet that honourable gentleman expressed the great anxiety he felt for unanimity upon this question. The Court however would judge of the sincerity of his feelings by the amendment he had submitted.

He confessed himself to feel a difficulty in rising to address this Court upon a subject that had already elicited so much ability, and called forth so much sound argument; because it might appear that he could produce nothing new upon a question which seemed entirely exhausted: but he assured the Court, that if it had not been for the opposition this petition had met in its present stage, and the mode in which that opposition was manifested, he should not have at all trespassed upon the attention of the Court. But as he had risen, he certainly should not abuse their indulgence by any lengthened obtrusion upon their notice.

The honourable gentleman (Mr. Hume) must excuse him if he was no friend to the composition that had been just published under his sanction, when he observed that honourable gentleman, upon every occasion, to oppose every thing he could in the way of the Company's views: and when he recollected the tenor of all his speeches, he thought he might safely look upon him, not in the light of a friend to the interests of the Company. He did, however, hope for better things from him: and that when he got rid of that zeal which now seemed to warp his judgment, he would become a friend instead of an enemy. He made no doubt that his sentiments and opinions upon this subject would

change; and that the Company would, ere long, find him a faithful and worthy member of their body. It was true, that the honourable member had not been long amongst them, and it would scarcely be expected that he would enter into the spirit of this subject with the same warmth as the old and approved friends of the Company. Seldom was it found that new converts, either in matters of religion or systems of opinion, were very zealous in pursuing them at first; because they still retained a natural tendency to early impressions. The time, however, would come, he hoped, when he would adopt sentiments less adverse to the interests of his Country, and the advantage of this Company.

It had been reported, and the idea very widely circulated, that the India Company and the Ministers, on account of some difference of opinion between them, were, at this moment, in open and violent hostility towards each other. Now such a report every one must see could answer no good purpose, and might be attended with very bad consequences: and because he anticipated that a very unfair use would be made of such a report, he thought it necessary to give a public denial of it, which he now did, by declaring that it was not the fact. He would appeal for the truth of this denial to the Chairman, and to the gentlemen

who were members of the deputation to Government, whether the conversation which they had had with the Minister was not of the most respectful and conciliatory nature, and whether every civility and polite attention was not shewn, that could be manifested, towards persons in their high and responsible situation? This was a fact which they must all allow; and it would be bad policy indeed, if, in a question which involved so much of their interest, and which was so nearly connected with the affairs of the public, to enter into any thing like an acrimonious discussion upon a question so ably, and with so much temper, argued in that room. On the occasion he alluded to, not a violent expression, nor an intemperate word, escaped from either side upon the subject. His attention had been drawn to this matter in consequence of the unfounded rumours abroad upon the subject, and he was glad of the opportunity to declare that there was not the slightest pretence for the report in circulation. Every one must allow that the Minister had a public duty to perform, as well as a private one; and as a part of the administration with which he was connected, he had a right to form such an opinion as the report of the case of the East India Company required. For his own part, he thought, that if the Ministers were open to

conviction by the most solid arguments, and the soundest reasoning; those reasons and those arguments would be found in this Petition, and they would not suffer themselves to he led into error and mistake upon this great question by the gross misrepresentations of revolutionary and designing men. He made no doubt, that when the Company's Petition came fairly under the consideration of the Legislature, and when the matter came before both Houses of Parliament, they would see the wisdom of continuing that system, which the most profound statesmen, from the reign of Queen Anne till now, had adopted and encouraged. They would recognise, with approbation, the maxim of those statesmen, "that it was impossible our East India possessions could be advantageous to the mother country, unless the intercourse was carried on through the medium of what was vulgarly called—a *monopoly*." Such was the maxim, such the opinion of the most illustrious statesmen this country ever saw. But that vulgar notion, which had obtained, as to the import of the word monopoly, he was not surprised at, when he considered that those who affected to be very conversant in East India affairs did not understand the true meaning of the word, as applicable to the Company. The word *monopoly* was an invidious term, and perhaps a

just object of jealousy, if it was to be taken in the sense it was vulgarly used. But that interpretation of it in the present case was inadmissible, because all it meant was *protection*—(*Hear! hear!*)——*That* was the distinction to be taken when the word was applied to the East-India Company; but he hoped, when these points came to be considered with fairness and impartiality, the Minister would follow the example and sound policy of his predecessors; and instead of granting the object sought by the enemies of the Company, their agents, and their advocates, whose wish, it seemed, was to ruin and destroy the British empire in India, they would adopt a different line of conduct, and reject those counsels and suggestions which, if adopted, would be destruction and fatal to the power of this Country in India.

Whilst he was up, he hoped the Court would excuse him if he occupied their time a little longer, to remark upon a circumstance which happened some years since. When Mr. Fox succeeded Mr. Pitt in power, it was expected that a statesman, who had hitherto differed from Mr. Pitt in every political question brought before the Legislature, would carry with him into office feelings of hostility towards the East-India Company, who were much indebted to the discernment and counte-

nance of Mr. Pitt. But the fears thus entertained were dissipated early; for Mr. Fox, as soon as he came into power, entered into all the doctrines, and expounded all the opinions of that great statesman upon this question. The reason he (Sir Theophilus Metcalfe) drew this fact under the consideration of the Court was to notice the very remarkable fact, that these two great statesmen, (for great indeed they were) hardly ever concurred upon any one point of politics, yet united in sentiment upon this question, and agreed unequivocally that the East India Company must remain unmolested in the enjoyment of their privileges. This was, indeed, a strong fact. Here were two illustrious statesmen who were not only the luminaries of their time, but the luminaries of British history; men who might be said to divide their opinion upon almost every subject they spoke, and who were hardly ever known to agree with each other. Still these two men concurred on this one point; and it was remarked at the time, that they complimented each other on the progress made in their sentiments towards unanimity. Surely, then, when men like these held it as a leading feature of their politics, that the commerce of the Company was to be held sacred, and was not to be touched, was it to be endured, that their rights were to be wrested

from them by the advocates from Liverpool, from Bristol, or by any other set of men whatever?

With these precedents in view, he would not be so unjust to the Minister of the present day, as to suppose him capable of thinking a measure of this kind was more advisable or more just now than it was at the period when those great statesmen lived. When this momentous question came to be fully and fairly discussed, he did hope with confidence to find that the Ministers of the present day did not think differently from their great predecessors. If there was any one Minister from whom the East-India Company had a right to expect a greater opposition to their claims, it was from Mr. Fox, for reasons too obvious to render a detail of them necessary; and, when *he* came into power, it was predicted by persons now within these walls, that in all probability the affairs of the East-India Company would languish under the influence of his counsels. The contrary, however, was the fact; for from the moment he took his seat on the Treasury bench, he espoused the cause with as much warmth, and became their advocate with as much zeal as ever Mr. Dundas did, who was supposed to be the Minister most favourable to their views that ever sat in the cabinet. Mr. Fox's expression in the

House of Commons was, "The East-India Company *must* be supported." This was a strong declaration, when it was recollected from what quarter it came. Mr. Fox was satisfied of the policy as well as the prudence in supporting the Company with all the authority of Parliamentary sanction. For his own part, he was afraid that those persons who demanded so loudly an open trade to India little understood their own interests; and being mistaken in their own views, it was not surprising that they were blind to the interests of their Country. He had considered this subject patiently, deliberately, impartially, and with no narrow nor selfish view. The result of his attention to it was, a firm conviction that the compliance with all the demands of the petitioners to open the Outports, would bring the East-India Company to ruin; and the ruin of the Company at home would inevitably ruin all their settlements abroad. If they were ruined at home, the undoubted and inevitable consequence would be the loss of the Indian empire. But admitting, for the sake of argument, that the trade was *partially* opened; for it might be said, that it was not meant to throw the trade open to all descriptions of persons, but merely to a limited number of the Outports; would it not follow, he would ask, if such were allowed to be the case, that the

clamour would be ten times greater than that which was raised against what was called *East-India monopoly*. Would not those ports which were not admitted to the same privileges say, in that case—"Here is an instance of gross partiality: *those* ports can have no better right to the privileges than we have?" They would say, and they would justly say, that this was an instance of the grossest partiality, because it would be holding forth a pretended alleviation of the pressure of the times, without giving to those who would be equally affected with that pressure the same opportunity of relief, while the Company itself would be as much affected as if *all* the Outports were open. He certainly felt unanimity to be a very essential object to attain, because he was sure that the Ministers were not by any means their enemies. *They* had a very difficult card to play; and whatever line they took, they must expect to meet with opposition. It was true, the Company had resolved upon a Petition, certainly couched in very firm language—a Petition which gave a very just picture of the state of the Company, and its claims upon the justice of the Country; but he was sorry to observe, that amongst a vast number of Proprietors out of doors, a degree of unaccountable apathy was manifest upon this question; and he was astonished, when he con-

sidered the number of Proprietors extended over the United Kingdom, so much indifference should be evinced to their own interest, as well as to the interest of their country. He only wished, however, that it could be ascertained who were the friends and who their enemies, in order that they might guard themselves against the designs of seeming friends. It had been contended, that the East-India Company had merely Claims, but no Right, in this question. He was not prepared to go into the latter part of the objection; but Claims the Company certainly had, and those Claims founded upon such firm grounds, that no sophistry, no argument could divest the Company of them; and whatever might be the apathy in those to whom he was compelled to allude, he besought every Proprietor present to consider himself as the identical man upon whom depended the safety of the Company.—(*Hear! hear! hear!*) He had very little doubt in his mind that Parliament itself, whenever it came to consider the question, would view it upon general and liberal grounds of policy, and not upon principles of prejudice or partial benefit. He was persuaded that whenever they did come to decide upon the question, they would resolve that a system ought not to be abandoned which had extended the British power in India, in-

creased the revenue of the mother country, extended her traffic over the Indian empire, and brought great wealth and other substantial benefits, not only to her Capital, but to her whole United Kingdom. He trusted the Court would agree with him, that such a system ought not to be abandoned slightly; but he hoped that many days would not elapse, ere this question would be determined by the Legislature in such a way as would confirm the claims of the Company upon the Legislature; and as would give a lasting security to the British empire and her valuable interests in that distant part of the world.

The *Deputy Chairman* (Mr. Thornton) said, he once thought it would be of very little importance whether those words complained of by the honourable gentleman were or were not adopted in the Petition. He acknowledged his having stated to an honourable and most respectable Proprietor in the Court, that if there was a difference of opinion upon the question, and that honourable gentleman thought proper to move that those words should be left out, he was convinced there would be no objection, because he (Mr. Thornton) considered them to be immaterial, and, like many other sentences in the same Petition, might safely be left out, or safely kept in; but from the manner in which it wa proposed to expunge

them—from the quarter which proposed it—from the honourable gentleman's opportunities of discussing this question before—from all his observations, and, particularly, when he placed this objection in the front of his observations—when he delayed another for the mere purpose of forcing *this* into the foremost rank, he could not help thinking that the honourable gentleman's amendment ought not to be adopted—and when he considered that, by expunging these words, the *true* meaning and interpretation of them might be wrested out of doors, it was no wonder that what he once thought to be wholly uninteresting should now become matter of real consequence and serious import; and it behoved the Court to be cautious in every step they took, in every word they blotted—for even the wisest minds might be swayed and misled by the representations that could be artfully and ingeniously laid before the public as the reasons for expunging them. The Court of Directors had a great responsibility upon their hands. They were bound, if the public themselves were blind to their own interests, to give that warning—to light up that beacon which those words assumed. If the object, sought now by so much clamour and noise by those gentlemen from the Outports, was granted, he would venture to predict, that those

misguided and deluded men, in the space of three or four years, who had sacrificed their fortunes on such destructive speculations, might come, with some appearance of justice, to the Courts of Directors and Proprietors, and say, "Why did you not hold out this warning? You knew the danger—you must have anticipated the event—why did you suffer us to be deceived by this specious illusion? With the candour, the honour, the humanity of British merchants and fellow-subjects, why did you not press it upon us, that we were eagerly rushing on to our own ruin?"—(*Hear! hear!*) This, he submitted, would be the consequence *now*, in particular, if these words were taken out of the Petition. These deluded men would be almost justified in goading the Company with such a complaint, if these words were not only not kept in, but if they were not strongly marked in the Petition; they were introduced for the purpose of shewing that the Company would not make themselves a party to a public delusion; they must now be maintained to proclaim publicly, that whatever may be the opinion of an individual, the rest of the Company continued to deprecate the illusion. Ought not those gentlemen from Liverpool, who, by their own petition, acknowledged that they might be ruined in many cases, which opinion Lord Buckinghamshire him-

self held in his letter to the Court; for he acknowledged in that letter that there might be a partial ruin—ought not, then, these men to be grateful for the warning declaration of the Company? Mr. Thornton himself thought the ruin would not be so partial as his Lordship represented, but *general;* and indeed many of the other petitions glanced at the very same apprehensions. It was for their sakes—it was for their safety that the words should be retained. To expunge them now, after they had been so animadverted upon, would be in some measure to countenance the illusion by an act of their own. They would actually make themselves parties to that delusive experiment which those unfortunate petitioners, as well as themselves, would have every reason to deplore.—(*Hear! hear!*)

The allusion of his honourable friend, who spoke last, to the opinions of certain great statesmen, had put him in mind of another great statesman's declaration upon this important subject. He recollected it well; it was deeply imprinted on his memory. The late Lord Melville, speaking of the advantages and disadvantages of a change in the system of affairs in India, and particularly pointing out the impolicy of an alteration in that system, said, "that substantial and permanent benefits ought not to be sacrificed

to occasional, and perhaps delusory schemes of gain." These delusory schemes of gain were those now in question. They were what the words in the Petition alluded to; and he sincerely hoped that as a caution to such as were likely to be deluded, they would stand, what the hon. objector had himselt unintentionally drawn them forward to be—the prominent features of the Petition. *(Hear ! hear ! hear !)*

Mr. *Grant* said that as he was under the necessity of attending some pressing Parliamentary duties in the House of Commons, he should take the liberty shortly to address the Court. And he trusted he should be allowed to trespass on their attention. He meant to reply to what had fallen from the hon. Proprietor who began this discussion, and who called upon the Court to leave the words alluded to out of their petition. He would also avail himself of this opportunity to answer another hon. Proprietor (Mr. Rock) who asked him what was the meaning of this *illusion* talked of in the Petition?—To that hon. Proprietor's question he would first direct his attention: and tell him that the Directors of the East-India Company considered *the opening of the trade to India* as an *illusion*; they considered it to be an illusion on the part of the merchants, and they considered it as some sort of illusion on the part

of the government; considering it in respect to India and to China it must be called an illusion in a double sense. The Directors used the words in their petition without meaning to give offense either to government or to any persons to whom their observation might apply. If it was the intention of the Court to reject *all* plans offered to them, and if such were the import of the words objected to by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hume), he would have a right to suggest such an alteration in the Petition, as had been proposed by him: but if any plan was to be proposed or adopted, which, after the best sense of the Court that could be taken, should seem to them to be wholly inconsistent with their interests, and which they would wish to deprecate as unworthy their sanction, they would have a right to declare that they would not become parties to any measure which should deprive them of the means, and the power in their hands. The sense of the Court had been already taken upon this part of the Petition, and the hon. gentleman having had so many opportunities of objecting to it before, it was now too late to say that it ought to be excluded, just at the time when the Petition was brought before the Court for final approbation. But considering that there was no foundation for the hon. gentleman's objection, he, for one,

should agree with the question for continuing the words.

He trusted he might be permitted to say a few words on the observation of the hon. gentleman with respect to the other proposed alteration in the Petition. He (Mr. Hume) had stated that the sum of £6,289,405 alledged to be the surplus profits of the Company was not satisfactorily made out, that the Company was mistaken in the amount of those profits, and that the fact was wholly erroneous. Now the hon. gentleman was, himself, entirely mistaken in his views of the subject, because he had taken the amount of the Company's *import* trade, instead of *export*: and if it had been so mentioned in the Petition as matter of import, the £6,289,405 would have been found in the documents given to the public, before even the suggestion of the hon. gentleman for an alteration in the Petition, and there would have been no occasion to state that which was open to examination. The hon. gentleman had argued from false premises, because if he had examined the accounts before the Proprietors touching the scale of the Company's income, he would have found himself perfectly convinced of the truth of the statement in the Petition: but the hon. gentleman seemed in his calculations upon this question to go rather upon the matter

averred in the petitions against the renewal of the Company's Charter than the Petition laid before the Proprietors. Now, what was the argument of the merchants claiming to be admitted to a participation in the trade to India?—they said that the increase of the Company's territory since 1792, instead of producing a proportionate increase of their trade, occasioned in fact a decrease. The territory of the East-India Company had been increasing before the year 1792, and therefore the Court was to understand the meaning of those merchants to be, that while the Company had increased their territory, their trade had decreased. This argument he acknowledged could not be answered by mere statement or assertion. But there was a far better answer to it to be found in the Report made by the Company upon this subject; and there it appeared clearly that this assertion was wholly unfounded in truth; because in the year 1793, and since that time, instead of there being a *decrease* in the trade there was a manifest *increase*. This was matter of reference and did not depend upon mere oral statement. At present without going farther into the subject, he was convinced there was no reason whatever for making any alteration in the Petition.

He would only farther observe that the ques-

tion was of such vast importance that it ought not to be delayed in its decision by questions certainly of very great importance, but which could not be considered at the same time with the subject of the Company's Charter. The question he principally alluded to was that which respected the East India Company's ships. That was a large question, which the Court had not now the means of deciding. But if they had, before they adopted any plan upon the subject, they would necessarily have occasion to bestow upon it a great deal of painful attention. He submitted, that the Court was not called upon at present to consider that subject, because it formed no part of the business before them. And after all, it was not their opinion that would decide that question, for it would be decided by other parties. But one thing was certain, that if the object contended for by the Outports were granted to them, it would be impossible to prevent the mischief that would arise from those Outports building ships, and bringing them home to this kingdom. It would be impossible to controul them in what was so important to the welfare of the mother country; while, on the other hand, the East India Company never built their ships in India.

Mr. *Impey* said, he was sure there was no man who could be more sensible of the importance of

unanimity in their proceedings than he was; and he hoped the unanimity that had prevailed in the Court on the various discussions before it, would not, at this period, when those discussions had come almost to a close, be disturbed, by what he must call, a *stratagem* of the enemy.—(*Hear! hear! hear!*)—An observation had been just made, that if the Court approved of this Petition upon the whole, they ought not to cavil at particular parts of it, and enter into useless deliberations upon any unimportant or slight alteration. In that observation he fully concurred. He begged now to reflect upon the line of conduct the Court had pursued, which had been voted so unanimously. In these Resolutions there were many points that both he himself, and many others, might have altered for the better. But because he, and those gentlemen, conceived those resolutions contained the case of the Company substantially, they had abstained from making objections of minor importance for the purpose of exciting debate. Since he last had the honour of addressing the Court, he had read the Petition with great care and attention, and he was proud and happy to bear his testimony to the great ability displayed in the composition of all its parts. It did appear to him to be impossible that the case of the Company could be stated with more comprehensive

reasoning, more strength of argument, or more persuasive eloquence, than were to be found in that Petition: and whatever might be the event of the contest into which they were now forced, whether the Company were to be confirmed in the enjoyment of all their settlements, privileges, and immunities, or whether they were to be stripped of all those advantages which they had proved themselves so worthy to possess; that paper would be a splendid monument for the firmness and eloquence in which it is couched, and of the claims which the Company have been able to advance to the justice and gratitude of the country.—(*Hear! hear!*)—The Petition, in the first place, contained a short abstract of the history of the Company, and that, without doubt, was peculiarly necessary; because it gave information, not only to the public, but even to the Ministers and Legislators of the Country. It was an undoubted and notorious fact, of which he and many others in that Court had daily experience, that there was the grossest ignorance pervading the public mind upon the subject of East India affairs: and this ignorance was not confined to the great public; for they had occasion every day to remark how very ignorant even well informed and well educated men were upon the subject of India affairs. Whilst these men would

be ashamed to converse, or even open their mouths, if they were not well acquainted with the history, the power, and the polity, of the Greeks, Egyptians, and Roman empires, they betrayed no sort of shame at being wholly ignorant of the steps by which the East-India Company had attained unrivalled power in India, established stations that astonished even those who were acquainted with them, and instituted a system of polity that would do honour to the wisest studies of government. During the last half century, while the British nation had been engaged in many bloody contests, involved in scenes which had been as various as they were numerous, and frequently as disastrous as they were glorious; such was the character of the administration of the Company's affairs in India, that they had overcome all the opposition of their enemies, and established peace and tranquillity upon a footing not to be shaken by external relations. The names of *Clive*, *Hastings*, *Cornwallis*, and, though last not least, *Wellesley*, were names that would shine with peculiar splendour in the British annals. Those men had established in that Country a system of politics, and secured the Empire upon such a basis that nothing but our own indiscretion could destroy.—(*Hear! hear!*)—The Petition went on to state the rights of the

Company; and he was sure that no language was wanted, and none failed to be used to make the application of those rights commensurate with the history of our Eastern settlements. The Court had been told by those who were not eminent for their friendship to the Company, when the subject had been before agitated within those walls, "that their lease was out," and that observation had been repeated on a recent occasion in that Court. He was the more desirous of noting that remark, because it shewed the fallacy of the reasoning upon which those persons wished to deprive the Company of the advantages they so justly enjoyed. Those persons should be informed, that there was no truth in their assertion, and that the application of it was inconsistent with the grounds upon which the Company's claims were founded. These persons should be informed, that the key of India was the *purchased property* of the India Company. They should be informed, that the India Company held not their possessions by the right of conquest, which was, indeed, a tenure that might be doubted; but by purchase. Such was the means through which they came possessed of St. Helena, Bombay, Madras, Bengal, and Calcutta, the great emporium of British India. Perhaps those bold speculators, who now sought to invade their rights,

might be a little shaken in their hopes of rivalling the British East-India Company's trade by any means within themselves. They might, indeed, rival them if they could go to their ports, under the protection of the Company's cannon; but he had better hopes of the wisdom and generosity of the British Legislature, than to suppose that they would not *hesitate* and *deliberate* upon the expediency of divesting the East India Company of what he (Mr. Impey) called their unalienable rights, in those ports and batteries, by which their settlements and trade were protected; especially when they came to recollect that they were erected by their ancestors, and continued for two hundred years last past in the same proprietors.—The Petition also stated the Company's claims; and he would venture boldly to state, that never, in the history of mankind, were there any subjects of any empire that could advance such rational and such just claims upon the justice and gratitude of their country. What, he asked, were the claims they advanced? What were their merits? What the justice of their cause? A vast empire, supported by privileges of the most valuable kind —extended by a series of the most brilliant military successes—regulated upon the soundest principles of political wisdom—equally calculated to

promote the welfare of the Empire itself, and procure lasting benefit to the mother country: an establishment which had been now long flourishing, and this too, without any expence or trouble to the parent country; a possession which was maintained to it by the East India Company in the nature of a trust!—Such were the claims they had to advance upon the justice and gratitude of their Country. He had heard, and he had read, of the ingratitude of nations to their most meritorious servants; he had heard of the execution of a Phocion, and the banishment of an Hannibal; but happy he was to say, that those acts of injustice and ingratitude were the acts of declining States: they were symptoms which indicated the progress of their ruin and dissolution. But he could not imagine that this glorious nation, which had maintained the most arduous struggle in the annals of the world, to uphold the liberties of Europe against the machinations of a powerful enemy, would act so ungrateful a part towards a Company which had added the proudest jewel to the British Crown. And for what purpose, he would ask? For the purpose of a commercial speculation!—*(Hear! hear!)*—If this unwise step should be resolved upon, he hesitated not to say, that it must be carried into execution upon principles not only in direct contradiction

to modern experience, but in contradiction to the experience of the whole world.—*(Hear! hear!)*

The honourable gentleman (Mr. Hume) who had opposed the whole course of their proceedings in this important question, had thought proper to notice, with disapprobation, those words in the Petition, " that the petitioners submit, that they would not be contented to become parties to any system which, on consideration, should appear to them would be likely to prove an illusion." He would ask the honourable gentleman, whether he meant to say, that the Company *would* be justified in becoming parties to such a system, if they thought it an illusion? Entertaining, as the Company did, so unanimous a sentiment upon this subject, and having decided that the measure proposed by Ministers would be a delusion upon the merchants seeking an open trade, as their hopes could not be gratified; and, believing that it would be a complete delusion to suppose those gentlemen could carry on the trade when they entered upon it; the Company could not be justified in becoming parties to such a measure. If he understood the opinion of the Court correctly, and if he duly appreciated their interests, they would indeed be most unjustifiable if they did not state to the Le-

gislature what their sentiments were upon this subject. It had been said, " that it was the duty of the Company to obey the Legislature, whatever its decision might be." But he did contend, that it was not the duty of the Company, in a matter of compact, to agree to *any* terms which such a legislature might think it necessary to dictate. Would the honourable gentleman go the length of saying, if it was proposed, that the India Company should continue to direct the affairs of India, without the China trade, that the Company could perform their appointed trust upon those terms ? Should they, he would ask, be justified in becoming parties to that delusion upon the public ? How did the present disposition of Ministers differ from that, if the petitioning for a free trade for the outports would ultimately lead to the destruction of the Chinese trade ? In his opinion, if the East-India Company were decided upon this point, it would be illusory and unjustifiable, in the extreme, in them not to state to the Legislature that they were unable, on such conditions as were proposed, to carry on the business of the Company. He was sorry to observe, when the Court last met, that the same honourable gentleman who had taken, what had been called, so singular a line of conduct in this Court, persisted in asserting that the Directors had been

wrong in respect of the negociation they had had with His Majesty's Ministers. He was sorry that he should persist in that assertion; because, in the present stage of the business, it could be attended with no good end: and, certainly, it very ill accorded with the professions of friendship the honourable gentleman held out for a system of which he had been pleased to express his strongest approbation: but, he would say, that if the Court were unanimous amongst themselves, he did not despair of a satisfactory adjustment of this subject. For his own part, he highly approved the conduct of the Directors in the negociation. It was not true, that they held out any feeling of reluctance to meet the proposal of Government; on the contrary, they had stated, that they would undertake to come to an amicable agreement with the Government, if the proposal should be effectually insisted upon, and even if they thought it absolutely ruinous.

He was sorry to find that he had unfortunately given offence to the honourable gentleman by some expressions used by him (Mr. Impey) at the last Court, in which he called the honourable gentleman an enemy to the East India Company. He assured the Court he had no wish whatever to detract from the character of that honourable gentleman, by such a declaration. Indeed, at first, he was

not conscious that he had made use of any such expression, or that any observation had fallen from him which could procure such an effect upon the honourable gentleman's feelings; but he found, from the printed report of the debates, words were imputed to him, and which, he dared to say, were used, to this effect: "that it was not *every enemy* of the East India Company who was so *liberal* as the honourable gentleman;" or, in other words, that the honourable gentleman was more liberal than other enemies of the East India Company. The words he could not recall; but he hoped the Court would give him leave to justify them as well as he could. In the first place he certainly never thought that in accusing the honourable gentleman of being an enemy to the Company he could be considered as having cast an imputation upon his moral character. Every one knew that Adam Smith was an enemy to the India Company. Every body knew also that Mr. Burke was no friend to the Company; yet no man thought proper to make that a subject of imputation upon their moral characters. All he could mean by what he said was merely an imputation upon the honourable gentleman's *intellectual*, and not his *moral*, character: and if the honourable gentleman conceived that these words in the Petition relating to the illusion should be

left out, all that could be said was, that the blame must be thrown upon the whole Court if they could not concur in his sentiments. But he really thought, when the honourable gentleman had made up his mind to act the part he had taken in the Court, he ought also to have made up his mind to be considered as an enemy of the Company. That honourable gentleman had opposed their statements, and thrown every obstacle he could, in the way of their proceedings, and every word of the honourable gentleman shewed as all must admit, that the honourable gentleman was an enemy of the India Company. If that was the case he was at a loss to reconcile the conduct of the honourable gentleman with his expression, when he declared that he threw the imputation back into the teeth of the person who had designated him as an enemy to the Company. The inference of this was, that they were the enemies of the Company who advocated their cause; and, to simple minds, it would seem from thence, that the honourable gentleman was the *only friend*, and that the East-India Company were enemies to themselves!—(*Much laughter.*) But the honourable gentleman was not only not contented with assuring the Company that *he* was not their enemy, but he would have the Court believe that the merchants of the Outports

were not their enemies. Now, if the merchants were not their enemies, he much lamented that the Company had been so egregiously deceived with respect to their intentions, and it would have been much to their satisfaction if they had been apprized of this, in order that they might not only avoid ruin by their own means, but that they might have the satisfaction of falling by the daggers of their own friends—like Cæsar, whose assassins hailed him with obsequious reverence at the moment when their poignards were raised for his destruction.—*(Hear! hear!)* If he had inclined to be poetical upon this subject he could remind the Court of an adage which they must all remember:—

"An open foe may prove a curse,
"But a pretended friend is worse."

And as the honourable gentleman pretended to be one of the warm friends of the Company, he would beg leave to ask, what were the tributes of that friendship? The continued opposition of the honourable gentleman had made him their friend, just as too great partiality for his enemies had instructed him in the duties of their interest; and the disinterested feeling of the honourable gentleman reminded him of another couplet from

an eminent poet, which tolerably well depicted the sources of his friendship:

"And set our interests and our passions free,
"My friend may have the meat that injures me."

Now, he would take leave to ask, whether the honourable gentleman, if he had looked at the petitions of the Outports, would not admit, that there were in them many calumnies and many assertions hostile to the East-India Company? For he had not heard that honourable gentleman shew the slightest indignation against any of them, which he certainly would have done had he been sincerely the friend of the Company. The Court had a right to ask this of him; and if he really entertained those sentiments of friendship for the interest of the Company's claims, he trusted he would no longer oppose them,—no longer disseminate language and principles which might be seriously injurious to those whose friend he professed to be. If the honourable gentleman should pursue the same line of conduct, it would be impossible to believe that there was any sincerity in his declarations; and he must at once be pronounced to be an enemy; on the other hand, should he alter the line of conduct which he had hitherto pursued,

and prove himself the sincere friend of the Company, it was unnecessary to say that the Court would be thoroughly gratified by his exertions. He (Mr. Impey) was sorry to have taken up so much of the time and attention of the Court. The crisis was near approaching when they would come to the formal business of presenting the Petition to Parliament ;—a Petition which, if it was in substance true, no man ought to cavil at its inferior points. He anticipated an unanimous vote upon this question, and that the Petition would be presented to Parliament unaltered.

The amendment, as moved by Mr. Hume, was then read by the Clerk ; and the question was put by the Chairman, " that those words stand part of the Petition," when it was negatived with only *two* hands in its favour.

Mr. *Hume* again rose and said, that, seeing the disposition of the Court, he should not persist in moving what he conscientiously conceived to be sound objections to the Petition and the right course of proceeding on the present occasion. If simple assertion was to be brought forward, and stated in opposition to what he had offered as facts, and given from the actual accounts laid before the public and the House of Commons itself; and, if simple declaration, on

the part of honourable gentlemen, were to be received as proofs in answer to what he had offered as facts in the case, he thought it was wholly unnecessary for him to attempt any thing further in that Court. This, however, he would undertake to say, that he could not admit, for one moment, the imputation that any unworthy motive had actuated him in any part of his conduct; and if he did not think that, in withdrawing from the East-India Company a part of their various expences and commercial engagements, and allowing a participation of the trade to the Outports, would be attended with benefit to the country as well as to their best interests, he should not for a moment have ventured to oppose any thing offered to the Court. Already he had stated an instance of the strongest and most important nature, for the purpose of shewing the necessity of alleviating the national distresses of the country; and he should not, at this time, renew his observations upon that subject. Upon the matter of illusion, it was considered by honourable Proprietors, who spoke in the course of this day, that the opening of the trade to India was an illusion. He could have given an instance, as strong as ever was known, and as ever occupied the attention of any political body,

for the purpose of illustrating the subject, and shewing the fallacy of that idea. He alluded to events in Spain, when that country was the centre of all trade for the commerce of Europe. What, he would ask, was the cry of ruin and starvation—

Mr. *Parnther* spoke to order, and said that the honourable gentleman had already spoken, and there was no question before the Court.

The *Chairman* said he understood the honourable Proprietor to say, that he did not mean to persist in his other amendments.

Mr. *Hume* said, in his other amendments he certainly did not mean to persist.

The *Chairman* said, if that was the case he would submit to the honourable Proprietor that any further speech was unnecessary.

A cry of *Question* now prevailed through the Court.

Mr. *Hume* thought it might appear very extraordinary if, having come before the Court to propose amendments, he had retired and declined supporting them, without assigning his reasons for such conduct. As that would appear extremely inconsistent, he hoped he should be allowed to state his reasons for withdrawing the amendments, and why he would not press the

question.—*(Cries of Question! question! question!)* He would not take up the time of the Court, as he saw it was determined he should not be heard.*(—No! no! no!)*

The *Chairman* begged it might be understood that there was not the slightest disinclination either before or behind the bar to hear any thing the honourable Proprietor might think it necessary to suggest; but, learning that he meant to withdraw his amendments from the consideration of the Court, it did appear to him that his observations were somewhat irrelevant. He begged pardon for making use of that expression; but he really thought the course the honourable gentleman was now pursuing was wide of the question before the Court, which he apprehended was simply to approve of the Petition. If the honourable gentleman had persisted in his amendments, he might have taken a more extensive scope of argument; but as he had very kindly and considerately, for the benefit of the Court, declared that he would not take up their time, by further opposing the Petition, he (the Chairman) should submit whether the question ought not now to be put upon the Petition?

Mr. *Hume* said he had only two points to urge; but as there was no disposition to hear what he

had to say, he certainly should not trespass upon the attention of the Court.

Mr. *Randle Jackson* spoke to order. He said, if the honourable gentleman was to be allowed to sit down or stand up whenever he pleased, there would be no end of their discussions. Nothing, he was persuaded, would be more painful to that Court than, on a question of such great importance, that an impression should go forth of any honourable gentleman being compelled to sit down, because the Court would not give him a hearing. The honourable gentleman certainly was perfectly right in attempting to assign his reasons for not persisting in his proposed amendments; but, according to the declaration which had now fallen from the Chair, he was bound, as matter of respect to the Court, and as a rule of public debate, to confine himself strictly to a declaration of those reasons why he did not persist in his amendments. He (Mr. R. J.) was anxious it should not go forth to the public, that the declaration now made by the honourable gentleman was founded in truth. Such a declaration would indeed appear to be very extraordinary, when it was recollected that the honourable gentleman had distinctly avowed and acknowledged he had been heard to the full extent of his own wishes. Such was the ad-

mission of the honourable gentleman upon a former day, which he supposed the honourable gentleman would hardly venture to deny, and which a publication, since sent forth into the world by that honourable gentleman, fully confirmed. The Court, therefore, must not allow him to depart from his own admission. Certainly, from the disposition manifested by that honourable gentleman, it was pretty certain that if his inclinations were indulged, he would talk down a summer's sun:—*(a laugh)*—yet he had enjoyed the opportunity of being heard fully and fairly to the extent of his own wishes, he (Mr. Jackson) himself being among the auditors of his repeated speeches upon this subject; and certainly he admitted it to be desirable that he should have been heard, because it was important to the character of the Court; and, feeling it equally as important that the honourable gentleman should not be allowed to declare out of the Court that he had not had a patient hearing, he did hope that he would now be attended to with all the respect due to talents like his, and that the Court would listen to such reasons as his best judgment might suggest.

Mr. *Hume* said that if, on a former occasion, he had acknowledged that he had been fully and patiently heard, that acknowledgment was

due to the indulgence and kindness of the Court; but the allusion which the honourable Proprietor had made as to his having intimated that such indulgence was not bestowed upon him, that was not the time of which he complained. It was on a subsequent occasion when, he was sorry to say, that a very different disposition was manifested towards him; but, at present, he was discouraged from proceeding in the observations he was about to make, when he observed that, however irrelevant the observations of other Proprietors were, and many such he had heard in the course of this debate, the rigid rule, which was now adopted against him, had not been enforced towards others. However, as he saw some symptoms of a disposition now to hear him, he should allude to the fact he had intended to bring forward before. It was a notorious circumstance in history that there was a similar outcry in Spain, when that country was the emporium of commerce, to that which now assailed the ears of every one upon the subject of East-India affairs, when it was proposed to remove the trade of that country from *Cadiz* to *Corunna*, the arguments and the outcry on that occasion were, that destruction was to take place, to the commerce of the country.

He had now stated every thing he wished to

state; because he was satisfied, that if he ventured more the Court would again think he was wandering from the subject. It was perfectly impossible that he could be deemed regular, after what had fallen from the Chair; and as he could not hope that gentlemen would go along with him in a concurrence of sentiment, he certainly should not trespass longer on the attention of the Court.—*(Cries of Go on! go on!)*—The honourable gentleman continued: and said, that he thought it was perfectly unnecessary and useless for him to go on, when he perceived the feeling of the Court towards him. He was aware, that when he stated his reasons for moving his original amendment, the honourable gentleman, who sat within the bar (Mr. Thornton), had declared, that in point of opposition, nothing would induce him to agree with his (Mr. Hume's) amendment.—*(No, no! no such thing!)*

The *Deputy Chairman* (Mr. Thornton) said, he wished to be understood, that it was not on account of opposition to the honourable gentleman that he did not agree with his amendment; because he should think that a very unworthy motive, which never could operate on his mind. But it was from the manner in which the honourable gentleman proposed to give up a *previous* motion, that he could

not give his sanction to a suggestion which he thought would be extremely detrimental to the Country. He therefore begged leave to set the honourable gentleman right, by assuring him, that he had no unworthy motive for opposing his amendment.

Mr. *Rock* now attempted to address the Court; but his voice was drowned by the cry of *Question! Question!*

Mr. *Hume* again rose. He said, he was only stating *one* of *fifty* reasons why he was discouraged from proceeding, and why he was deterred from going on with such observations as occurred to him. He had taken down the honourable gentleman's (Mr. Thornton) words, and he took them down right, he was sure. The words, he said, were these: "that previous to coming into Court he saw no particular objection to those words being left out; but now, seeing the quarter from which the proposition came, and the manner of its being done, he, for one, hoped the amendment would not be adopted." He appealed to the Court, whether he was not correct? The hon. gentleman had said, that although he admitted that the words were immaterial, they became matter of great consequence, because the proposal to leave them out came from him (Mr. Hume). Surely, when such a disposition as this

was manifested towards him, was he not justified in saying, that there seemed to be no inclination to give him a patient hearing? This shewed, notwithstanding the sincere professions he had made of good-will towards the Company, that the honourable gentleman proceeded on the idea of his being an enemy. He appealed to the recollection and justice of the Court, whether the *sole* ground of his proposition was not his wish that the Court should be unanimous in their sentiments upon the subject of their Petition, and that they should agree to nothing which should afford ground for any thing like *cavil* on the part of those who were enemies of the Company. He wished clearly to be understood, notwithstanding what an honourable gentleman had said, that he was a *new convert* upon this subject, he was by no means so indifferent to the interest and welfare of the Company for that reason. That honourable gentleman had remarked, that new converts were not generally so sincere in their sentiments, and so zealous to propagate their fai h as the old disciples of the system. The honourable gentleman was mistaken in his ideas upon *that* subject; for it was generally remarked, that new converts were remarkable for their zeal in the new doctrines they had embraced, and he trusted the Court would find in him as worthy a

disciple as any of the most zealous of their friends. But really he should consider himself obtruding on the time of the Court, if he were to go through all the observations he should wish to have made in support of the other objections to this petition. Trusting, however, that these points to which he had taken exception would be explained elsewhere in the way an honourable gentleman had stated, he should not now trespass any further on the time of the Court.

The question was then put upon the Petition, and carried, with only one dissentient vote.

A second Petition to Parliament, to enable the Company to raise money, if it should be necessary, to meet the bonds that had been paid, and other calculations relating to the East India Company's affairs, was then laid before the Court, read, and agreed to.

The Chairman stated to the Court, that there were two other Petitions to be read, which were merely Petitions to the House of Commons to receive the Petitions which the Court had just approved of.

The Petitions were then read, and agreed to unanimously.

The *Chairman* then said, he had only to move that the Company's seal be affixed to the Petition.

Mr. *Hume* asked, whether it was not usual, in Petitions like the two last agreed to, for the Petitioners to pray that they might be heard by their Counsel, if necessary.

The *Chairman* said, he believed not; but if the Petitioners against the Company wished to be heard by Counsel, then it would be necessary for the East India Company to have Counsel also.

Mr. *Hume* observed, he had merely mentioned it, as it occurred to him it might be necessary.

The *Chairman* replied, that the Company must wait for the occasion, if Counsel should be necessary.

The question for putting the Company's seal to the Petitions was then carried unanimously.

The question, "that this Court do now adjourn," having been put by the Chairman,

Mr. *Randle Jackson* rose. He begged pardon for rising at this hour of the day to trespass on the attention of the Court: but he did it with a view of calling their notice to the further papers just published by the Company (No. 8.), respecting the negociation for a renewal of the East India Company's privileges. Those papers purported to contain an answer to the arguments urged in the Petitions from the Outports against the renewal of the Company's Charter. The Company having been informed by one of His Majesty's

principal Secretaries of State, in his letter of the 4th of January, that they might have the Petitions presented to Parliament in the course of the last session laid before them, for the purpose of ascertaining the species of arguments which had induced His Majesty's Ministers to be of opinion, that the import trade from the East Indies should not be confined to the Port of London; and as the Company felt it their duty to submit to the Legislature such representations as they thought necessary for the security of their privileges, they had availed themselves of that offer so made to them. The Court, he was persuaded, would bear testimony to the ability and the convincing arguments contained in those papers, in answer to the demands of the Outports. The difficulty of their task must have, indeed, been very great, when they considered the mass of Petitions, heavy beyond all example, which the Court of Directors had to peruse. Perhaps their reply to the propositions contained in those Petitions was the completest answer that could be given upon such a subject. He would not now enter into a recapitulation of the important details contained in those papers, though the statements were as succinct as it was possible for the most lucid arrangement, and the strongest language to make: and though the reasons set forth were of the most conclusive nature, in favour of

the Company, and would not fail, he hoped, of making a deep impression upon the minds of His Majesty's Ministers, yet he was afraid that the papers were too voluminous to allow a general perusal of them; and, consequently, the object of the Court would be defeated, however powerful the argument, and however convincing the reasoning. He therefore thought it was of the greatest importance to their cause that this report should on some future occasion, be compressed into a more substantial and concise form, or thrown into a few short but expressive resolutions, in order that those who *run* might *read*—to induce the public and every one interested in this question, to hear the reasons, and read the argument of the Company—this was a most desirable object to attain; especially when he considered the extremely important propositions contained in that Report. [For this Report, see the Appendix.] He would not detain them by reciting those propositions, which struck his mind to be the most important; but among others, there was one which he could not resist stating to the Court. It had been notoriously said, but fallaciously argued, that the East India Company possessed what was vulgarly called, a *monopoly* in the trade to India. Any man who read that report dispassionately, would be convinced of the erroneous impression which

had gone abroad on this subject. He would find, upon the most satisfactory documents contained in that report, that no less than £33,000,000 of money had been employed in commercial transactions, without the Company's having any participation with that measure. Besides this, there were a variety of other most important statements upon the subject of the China trade, which shewed how fallacious the views entertained by the public were. The subject also of what was called *the Company's rights*, was most ably treated. It was asked, what rights had the Company? When they talked of rights, what did they mean? "They had no rights," it was said. Surely the public should entertain a just view of the subject. Such a corporation as the India Company must have great and important rights, notwithstanding the expiration of their Charter. Surely the possession which they enjoyed and had acquired in India; the commercial relations they had established under the sanction of the charter granted them in 1793, were rights as dear to them, and as valuable as the privileges enjoyed under the Charter of the Corporation of London. Therefore, when the Court talked of rights, they meant those rights claimed under existing charters; and when they talked of being ruined by the deprivation of their charter, they called those grounds

upon which they sought a continuance of it, not *rights* but *claims*; and certainly, in point of justice, this was the fair principle upon which their appeal could be made to the justice and the gratitude of the country. What were the claims of the Company? They had established a system of government unexampled in the history of any colonial settlement. They had provided regulations advantageous to themselves and to their mother country, and they had created a population beyond all calculation great. These were the grounds upon which, not the Company's *rights*, but their *claims* were founded. The Company was much misrepresented when it was stated that they called that a right by which they desired the continuance of an exclusive trade to India. Such was not the case. The Company merely called them claims, and not rights. This, and a variety of other misrepresentations, in which the Company had been subjected, the paper he now alluded to would completely explain. He took this occasion to vindicate the Company from any disposition on their parts to reject all alterations in the plan by which they enjoyed the exclusive trade to India; but he apprehended that it was impossible a more perfect system of government could be established than that now acted upon in India,

had turned out to be; and he thought it was impossible to make any alteration in the political system by which the East was governed, without endangering the security of our empire in India. Desirous, however, as he was, that the report to which he had adverted might be attended with the greatest possible advantage in removing those misrepresentations and prejudices by which the public judgment was warped upon this subject, he felt a strong wish that it might be reduced to such a form which, while, on the one hand, by its brevity, it lost none of the spirit of the original, and, on the other, insured the certainty of its intended effect. He should not now, however, trespass upon the time of the Court by offering any proposition upon the subject; but certainly, at some future Court, without its being called for the purpose, he should propose something in the nature of these four short resolutions containing the spirit of the report. With this intimation, perhaps he would at the next Court, or the earliest convenient season, take the liberty of offering some proposition of that nature.

The Rev. Mr. *Thirlwall* begged to remark, with respect to the papers alluded to by the honourable Proprietor, that, for his own part, a more luminous publication, or more convincing arguments he never read. They were such as

impressed upon his mind the strongest conviction of the unanswerable merits of the India Company's cause. He would submit, therefore, that instead of abridging them of one word, as the honourable and learned gentleman proposed, they ought to remain in their present unexceptionable shape. Every part of them was intelligible to him; and, being himself a man of very plain understanding, he was persuaded that every body present must be equally impressed with their truth, and the force of their reasoning. As the papers were so very intelligible, he was persuaded there was no man who felt any interest upon this subject would hesitate in reading every part of them. He therefore thought the honourable gentleman's proposition was rather impolitic; and so far was he from thinking that they ought to be compressed, that if the learned gentleman would not, he *would*, move, that the Report should be printed and circulated.

Mr. *R. Jackson* said he by no means wished to excite discussion. He had merely offered his reasons for thinking that the report would produce a greater effect upon the public mind if it was in a more compressed form. He was afraid that in its present shape it was so very voluminous that it would not be read. His wish was by no means to suppress any thing contained

in it; on the contrary, his desire was that it should be read. But if it would not be read in its present state, he was desirous of answering the purpose of the Report by publishing certain resolutions containing the substance of it.

Mr. *Impey* wished to make one observation. It did seem to him, that no proposition like that suggested by the honourable and learned gentleman would have the effect which the Report itself would have upon the public mind. He could not conceive that a Report, which contained thirty or forty pages, and about nine propositions, was of such a length as to intimidate persons interested in this question from reading it. Certainly it was a most material Paper to the cause of the East-India Company; and there was no person, he was persuaded, who would take the trouble to read it, who would not be struck with the importance and the weight of the arguments contained in it. He believed there were few minds, even the most unenlightened, to which its statements would not be intelligible. Perhaps it might be thought rather voluminous; but, in his opinion, it would be impossible to compress it without the effect intended being materially lessened. No person, who entertained a due sense of the importance of this vast question, could feel any disinclination to peruse a

document even of much greater length. He therefore should rather have expected that a motion would have been offered for printing and circulating a Report so important to the views of the Company.

Mr. *Hume* rose amidst a cry of "*No question!*" for the purpose of addressing the Court. He said he was convinced what he was about to do was irregular; but he assured the Court that he would not have felt disposed to say one word, had not the honourable gentleman who spoke last but two (Mr. Jackson) used so many on the subject. The honourable gentleman had begged the question in so many instances, that he could not help making one or two observations.—(*A cry of question! question!*) However, as he now saw there was no disposition to hear him, he should certainly sit down.

The *Chairman* begged to remind the honourable gentleman that there was no question before the Court. His honourable and learned friend (Mr. Jackson) did not bring any question under the consideration of the Court. He had merely given notice that he should, perhaps, on some future occasion, submit to the Court certain propositions. The Court was not, however, debating those propositions at the present moment. Therefore he apprehended the honourable gentleman

(Mr. Hume) would be rather irregular in again addressing the Court. An honourable gentleman on his right hand (Mr. Thirlwall) did propose making some motion this day; but his honourable and learned friend (Mr. Jackson) did not do so; and, with respect to the other honourable gentleman's motion, he would take the liberty of submitting to him, as at the present moment the Court was so much thinned by the departure of Proprietors, whether it would be proper to come to a resolution of the nature suggested by him under such circumstances. However, he would leave it to his discretion.

The Rev. Mr. *Thirlwall* said that, with the deference he felt for the opinion of the Chair, he certainly would forbear following up his opinion with a motion.

The Court was then adjourned *sine die*.

APPENDIX.

Copy of a Petition from the EAST-INDIA COMPANY *to the Honorable* HOUSE OF COMMONS.

To the Honorable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled,

The humble Petition of the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East-Indies,

SHEWETH:

That your Petitioners, in approaching this Honorable House with an application for a continuance of the system by which the relation between Great Britain and the East-Indies is now regulated, hope they may be permitted to state the outlines of the history of the establishment of your Petitioners, as well as their present situation, as to their property and rights, their functions and obligations.

That the first adventurers in a trade from England to the East-Indies, by the way of the Cape of Good Hope, were incorporated by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, by her royal letters patent, bearing date the 31st day of December 1601*, by the stile of "The Governor "and Company of Merchants of London trading into "the East-Indies," to whom, by the same instrument, the exclusive right of trading to that country was granted by Her said Majesty for a term of fifteen years from Christmas then last past.

That the corporate capacity of the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into

* Printed Charters, 4to. edition, page 3.

the East-Indies, with the privilege of the exclusive trade, was renewed, revived, and confirmed to them, in perpetuity, by several charters, or letters patent, granted respectively by their Majesties, King James the First, King Charles the Second, King James the Second, and King William and Queen Mary*: subject, nevertheless, to a provision, that if the continuance of any of their charters, in the whole or in part, should not be profitable to the realm, that, upon three years warning to be given to the said Company, all the said charters should cease, determine, and be void.†

That the said Governor and Company were empowered by their Charters to establish factories and settlements in the East-Indies‡; to have the government of such factories and settlements, and to appoint governors; with a judicial power to equip and maintain military forces, by sea and land, for the defence of their settlements; with the power of making peace and war with any princes or people who were not Christians, within any places of their trade; to make reprisals from those persons, in those parts, from whom they should sustain any loss or injury; to erect castles, fortifications, forts, and garrisons; and also to coin Indian money§.

That, by virtue of these powers, the said Governor and Company made settlements, and built forts and factories at different places in the East-Indies, at a very great expence; which settlements, forts, and factories, with some territory annexed to them, were purchased from the native princes of the countries within their limits. The sovereignty remained with their respective chiefs, but the immediate government of those acquisitions was exercised by the Company, under the powers which are before mentioned to have been

* Printed Charters, 4to. edition, 31st May 1609, page 27; 3d April 1661, page 54; 5th October 1677, page 108; 9th August 1683, page 116; 12th April 1686, page 125; 7th October 1693, page 141; 11th November 1693, page 152.

† Ibid. 28th September 1694, page 181.

‡ Ibid. 3d April, 13th Charles II. 1661, page 54.

§ Ibid. 5th October, 28th Charles II. 1677, page 111.

granted to them by charter; and the said Company also made a settlement in the Island of St. Helena, on its being abandoned by the Dutch, about the year 1651.

That the property and sovereignty in and over the port and island of Bombay having been ceded by the King of Portugal to His said Majesty, King Charles the Second, as part of the dowry of the Infanta of Portugal on her marriage with King Charles, His said Majesty, by his royal letters patent, bearing date the 27th day of March 1669 *, granted and conveyed unto the said Governor and Company, their successors and assigns, the property thereof, with all the rights, profits, territories, and appurtenances, and constituted them the true and absolute lords and proprietors of the port and island, in the most unlimited manner; saving to His Majesty, his heirs and successors, his royal sovereignty of and over the inhabitants there: but His Majesty granted the authority of immediate civil and military government of the place to the Company. And St. Helena having been taken from the said Company by the Dutch, in the war of 1674, was retaken by a force belonging to King Charles the Second, who, by his royal letters patent, bearing date the 16th day of December 1674 †, regranted that island, with all the rights, profits, territories, and appurtenances whatsoever, unto the said Governor and Company, their successors and assigns; and His Majesty constituted them the true and absolute lords and proprietors thereof, saving the allegiance due to His Majesty, his heirs and successors: and the said charter contained powers and authorities for the government and defence of the said island.

That, by an act of Parliament, passed in the ninth year of the reign of His late Majesty, King William the Third ‡, for raising a sum of two millions, by loan, for the public service, it was enacted, that all the subscribers to the said loan should be entitled to traffic,

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* Printed Charters, page 80. † Ibid. p. 96.
‡ 9 and 10 William III. cap. 44. sect. 61.

and use the trade of merchandize, in such places, and by such ways and passages, as were then already frequented, found out, or discovered, or which thereafter should be found out or discovered, and as they severally should esteem to be fittest or best for them, into and from the East-Indies, in the countries and parts of Asia and Africa, and into and from the islands, ports, havens, cities, creeks, towns, and places of Asia, Africa, and America, or any of them, beyond the Cape of Bona Esperanza to the Streights of Magellan, where any trade or traffic of merchandize was, or might be, used or had, and to and from every of them. And, by the said act *, His Majesty was empowered to incorporate any of the subscribers, who should desire it, to trade with a joint stock: and it was enacted †, that at any time, upon three years' notice, after the 29th day of September 1711, upon repayment by Parliament of the said sum of two millions, or such part thereof as should be advanced, all the corporations to be created in pursuance of that act, and the benefit of trade thereby given, should absolutely cease and determine: and it was enacted ‡, that all such persons as should have a right of trading by virtue of that act, should have the sole and exclusive trade within the limits before mentioned.

That the said sum of two millions was subscribed within the time limited by the said act; and thereupon, by a charter, bearing date the 5th day of September 1698 §, His said Majesty was pleased to incorporate the larger part of the subscribers to the said loan, by the stile of "the English Company trading to the East-Indies;" and, by the said charter, powers of making settlements, and governing them, and maintaining military forces for their defence, were granted to the English Company, similar to those which are before stated to have been granted to the Old Company, since distinguished by the appellation of the London Company, the sovereign right, power, and dominion over

* Sect. 62. † Sect. 79. ‡ Sect. 81.
§ Printed Charters, p. 188.

all the settlements to be made, being reserved to His said Majesty.

That the above act of parliament and charter would have operated to have extinguished and determined the corporate capacity and privileges of the London Company, but the act contained a provision, that they should have liberty to trade till the 29th of September 1701: and the London Company having subscribed the sum of £315,000 towards the sum of £2,000,000 to be raised, became entitled to trade in respect of it; and therefore, by an act of Parliament passed in the twelfth year of the reign of His said Majesty, King William the Third *, their corporate capacity was continued to them, subject nevertheless to be determined upon the redemption of the fund established by the said act of the ninth of His said Majesty's reign.

That the said English Company acquired and settled several factories in the East-Indies at a very large expence †.

That, previous to the erection of the English Company, the London Company had carried on their trade with the East-Indies in competition with the Portuguese and Dutch and French Companies, and also in competition with unlicenced adventurers from Great Britain, who traded there, notwithstanding the exclusive grants which the London Company was in possession of, and which unlicenced adventurers, at times, acquired considerable ascendancy amongst the native powers ‡; and, after the incorporation of the English Company, they became also competitors in the said trade:—and no European nation having then acquired any considerable territorial dominion, the whole of the trade by Europeans was carried on entirely at the despotic will and sufferance of the native princes of the Mogul empire, the government and officers of which almost constantly shewed their favour and protection

* Private Acts, 12 Wm. III. cap. 28.

† Indenture quinquepartite, p. 316, they were made over to the United Company for £70,000.

‡ See Annals of the East-India Company.

to such of the competitors from whom they could obtain the largest presents; and, in proportion as they protected one of them, they oppressed the others: as an instance of which your petitioners shew, that the servants of the English Company in India, by means of corrupt influence with the ministers and servants of the Mogul, procured all the principal officers and members of the presidency of the London Company at Surat, then the chief seat of their trade in India, to be imprisoned for several seasons, and wholly to interrupt their commercial transactions *.

That the London Company and the English Company finding that, if their competition had continued, ruin must have ensued to both, agreed, about the year 1702, to unite together. The union was effected by force of two several indentures, dated respectively the 22d day of July 1702; one being an indenture tripartite made between Her late Majesty, Queen Anne, of the first part, and the said London Company of the second part, and the said English Company of the third part †; and the other being an indenture quinquepartite made between the said London Company of the first part, the said English Company of the second part, and certain persons, trustees of property belonging to the London Company of the third, fourth, and fifth parts ‡; and by force of an act of Parliament passed in the sixth year of the reign of Queen Anne §; and of an award of the Earl of Godolphin, the Lord High Treasurer of Great Britain, dated the 29th day of September 1708.

By the terms of the union, all the property and rights belonging to both Companies, at home and abroad, including the settlements, forts, factories, and territories which they had acquired, as is above stated, were valued, and in consideration of the value of the property of the London Company being paid or allowed in account to them, they, by proper legal instruments, transferred and made over all their pro-

* Annals, vol. III. pages 519, 543, 563.
† Printed Charters, page 243. ‡ Ibid. p. 316.
§ 6th Anne, cap. 17.

perty to the English Company: and the English Company were allowed in account of the value of their property, and the property and rights of both Companies were thenceforth vested in them, for the benefit of the united concern. And the London Company having completed the transfer of its property, surrendered its corporate capacity; and from thenceforth, the English Company took the stile of "the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East-Indies," which is now the stile of your Petitioners.

Your Petitioners crave leave to draw the attention of the House to some part of the subjects, of which the property of your petitioners consisted at the time of the union of the two Companies in 1702, and which they derived by transfer from them, with the cognizance and sanction of Her Majesty, Queen Anne, and of the Parliament. Amongst other things, your Petitioners were then entitled to, and possessed of, the Islands of Bombay and St. Helena, the sovereignty of which was vested in the Crown of Great Britain: they were entitled to, and possessed of, the factories of Surat, Swally, Broach, Amadavad, Agra, and Lucknow: on the coast of Malabar they were entitled to, and possessed of, the forts of Carwar, Tellicherry, and Angengo, and the factory of Calicut: on the coast of Coromandel they were entitled to, and possessed of, the fort St. George, with the castle, fortifications, and territory thereto belonging, on which a large city, called Madras, was built, the houses of which belonged to, and paid rent to, your Petitioners; Fort St. David, being a strong fort and factory, and about three miles compass of the circumjacent country, on which several small towns and villages were erected; the factories of Codolore, Porto Novo, Pettipollee, Madapollam, and the fort and factory of Vizagapatam. In Bengal, your petitioners were entitled to, and possessed of, Fort William, and the town of Calcutta, with a large territory thereto belonging; the factories of Ballasore, Cossimbuzar, Dacca, Hughly, Maulda, Rajamaul, and Patna. All these possessions were subject te the sovereignty of the Great Mogul. On the island

of Sumatra your Petitioners were entitled to, and possessed of, York Fort at Bencoolen, and a factory, with a territory of about five miles thereto belonging, and a factory at Indrapore.

That after the union of the two Companies, your Petitioners conducted themselves so as to conciliate and acquire the confidence of the natives of India, and for a considerable period of time they had no occasion to use the right which they enjoyed, of maintaining a military force, except for purposes little beyond those of police, and as guards of their fortifications against surprise; but, near the middle of the last century, it became necessary for your Petitioners to enlarge their military force, and to exercise the power of war, and of making political engagements with some of the native powers, to support the British interests in India, and in order to counteract the intrigues of the French, who had become auxiliaries to other native powers, with the design of driving your Petitioners out of the East Indies, and of excluding the British nation wholly from Asiatic commerce; but, by means of the forces raised and maintained by your Petitioners, and at their sole expence, your Petitioners completely defeated those objects, so that, at the conclusion of the war, which ended in the year 1763, the French were left without one single settlement, and almost without influence in any part of Asia.

In the year 1757, the Nabob of Bengal permitted your Petitioners to establish a mint at Calcutta *; and, in the same year, the said Nabob made over to your Petitioners the property in certain lands in Bengal, generally called the twenty-four Purgunhas†, and the saltpetre lands of the whole province of Bahar‡: and, in the year 1758, your Petitioners obtained a grant from the said Nabob for the free tenure of the town of Calcutta, discharged from the rent to which, to that time, it had been subject§. In the year 1759, the Soubah of the Decan made over to your Petitioners the

* Printed Treaties, page 9. † Ibid. page 10.
‡ Ibid. page 12. § Ibid. page 23.

whole of the circar of Masulipatam, with eight districts, as well as the circar of Nizampatam, and the districts of Condavir and Wacolmanner*. In the year 1763, the Nabob of Arcot made over to your Petitioners several districts of land surrounding Madras†, which lands have since been called the jaghire of your Petitioners: and such transfer was confirmed, in the year 1765, by the said Nabob, and also by the Great Mogul‡. In the year 1764, the Mogul made over to your Petitioners the country of the Guuzepoor and the rest of the Zemindary of Rajah Bulwant Sing§. In the year 1765, the Great Mogul granted to your Petitioners the country called the Northern Circars‖, and in the following year, such grant was acceded to by the Soubah¶: and, in the year 1765, the Great Mogul appointed your Petitioners, in perpetuity, to the office of Dewan of the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, such appointment being made as a free gift**; and, by virtue of such grant, your Petitioners, in the execution of the office, acquired the right of collection of all the revenues of the said provinces, for their own use, free from any account thereof to be rendered.

Your Petitioners crave leave to remark, that no part of the property in any of the forts, factories, or territories, which became vested in your Petitioners at the time of the union of the two Companies, nor any of the territories nor rights, lastly hereinbefore mentioned to have been granted to your Petitioners, were acquired by conquest, but by purchase, by means of pecuniary payments, or by services rendered to, or other good considerations moving the grantors.

That, about the year 1767, a claim was made, on the part of the Public, to the beneficial interest in the territorial acquisitions and revenues then lately obtained there; and thereupon agreements have been made, from time to time, that the possession of such acquisitions and revenues should remain with your Petitioners, upon a participation of the profit of the revenue be-

* Printed Treaties, page 347. † Ibid. page 348. ‡ Ibid. page 362.
§ Ibid. page 37. ‖ Ibid. page 361. ¶ Ibid. page 367.
** Ibid. page 43.

tween the Public and your Petitioners, as mentioned in several Acts of Parliament, made and passed at different times since 1767*, without prejudice to the claims of the Public or of your Petitioners.

That previous to the year 1773, the government of the settlements and acquisitions in India was conducted under the uncontrouled direction of your Petitioners, by virtue of the powers of government, which they derived from their charters; but ever since the year 1773, the mode of the immediate government of India has been regulated by Parliament†: and from that time to the year 1784, in pursuance of directions of acts of parliament, the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, and one of His Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, in their several departments, were made acquainted with the correspondence and orders sent to and received from India by your Petitioners, in any way relating to the management of the revenue, or civil or military affairs and government of your Petitioners in that country: and from the year 1784 to the present time, all acts, operations, and concerns, which in any ways have related to, or concerned the civil or military government or revenues of the territories and acquisitions in the East Indies, have been placed under the superintendance and controul of certain Commissioners appointed by His Majesty, in pursuance of acts of parliament passed for that purpose‡; and your Petitioners have been restrained from giving any orders or directions relative thereto, without the concurrence of the said Commissioners: and in cases in which the said Commissioners have been of opinion, that the subject matter of any of their deliberations, concerning the levying war or making peace, or treating or negociating with any of the native princes or states in India, communicated in orders to any of the governments in India, have been of

* 8 Geo. III. cap. 57; 9 Geo. III. cap. 24; 13 Geo. III. c. 64; 19 Geo. III. cap. 61; 20 Geo. III. cap. 56; 21 Geo. III. cap. 65; 33 Geo. 3. cap. 52.

† 23 Geo. III. cap. 63.

‡ 24 Geo. III. cap. 25; 28 Geo. III. cap. 8; 31 Geo. III. cap. 10; 39 Geo. III. cap. 52.

a nature to require secrecy, such orders have been sent through the medium of a Secret Committee of three of the Court of Directors of your Petitioners, according to the provisions in that case made by Parliament, without any privity of your Petitioners or of their Court of Directors, and without any discretionary authority on the part of the Members of such Secret Committee.

That between the period when such claim, as herein-before mentioned, was first made, on the part of the Public, to the territorial acquisitions in the East Indies, and the year 1793, a further acquisition of territory was made in India.

That the term, heretofore granted to your Petitioners in the exclusive trade to the East Indies, being about to be redeemed in the year 1794, an act of parliament was made and passed in the thirty-third year of the reign of His present Majesty*, whereby it was enacted, amongst many other things, that† the territorial acquisitions in certain former acts mentioned, together with the territorial acquisitions then lately obtained in the East Indies, with the revenues thereof respectively, should continue in the possession of your Petitioners, during the further term by that act granted in the said exclusive trade‡; and that your Petitioners should have the exclusive trade within the limits mentioned in the said act of parliament passed in the ninth year of the reign of King William the Third, subject nevertheless to such right of trading as is thereby given to individuals, to be carried on in the manner therein mentioned, and subject to a proviso to determine such right at any time, upon three years notice to be given by Parliament, after the 1st day of March 1811, upon the expiration of the said three years, and upon payment made to your Petitioners of any sum or sums, which, under the provisions of any act of that session of Parliament, should or might, upon the expiration of the said three years, become payable to your Petitioners by the Public, according to the true intent and

* 33 Geo. III. cap. 52. † Sec. 1. ‡ Sec. 71.

meaning of such act: but it was enacted*, that nothing in that proviso, or in any proviso in the said act in the ninth year of the reign of King William the Third, in the said charter of the 5th of September, in the tenth year of his reign, or in any other act or charter, should extend to determine the corporation of your Petitioners; and by the said act† certain appropriations were made of all the profits arising from the territorial acquisitions and revenues in India, and also from the sale of goods, and all other profits of your Petitioners in Great Britain, during the time of the exclusive trade thereby granted to your Petitioners.

That the notice required by the last-mentioned act of parliament hath been given by the Speaker of your Honourable House, for determining the exclusive trade of your Petitioners, on the 10th day of April 1814.

That since the passing the said last mentioned act, a further acquisition of territory and revenue in India has been made, and is now in the possession of your Petitioners. And your Petitioners also shew, that they have taken all the forts and factories which belong to the French, Dutch, and Danes in Hindostan: and your Petitioners are now in possession, as well of the territories mentioned in the said last mentioned act of parliament, as of those which have been since acquired; and the British dominions in India, without a rival or any enemy, now consist of a very large proportion of the peninsula, besides very extensive provinces in the north of Hindostan, and contain, as it is supposed, above fifty millions of inhabitants, and have been acquired wholly at the expence and risk of your Petitioners, without any charge whatever to the British Exchequer: for though land forces belonging to His Majesty have been employed in conjunction with the forces raised by your Petitioners; yet the whole of the expence of such forces of His Majesty, whilst they have been employed in such service, as well as for their passage out and home, and in recruiting, has been defrayed by your Petitioners: besides which, for a considerable

* Sec. 74. † Sec. 107 to 112.

length of time, your Petitioners furnished or paid for victualling and stores for the use of His Majesty's ships of war in the East Indies.

Your Petitioners beg leave humbly to represent, that the welfare and happiness of the inhabitants of the countries which have come under the care of your Petitioners, have been their chief object; and they have reason to hope and believe, that the amelioration of the condition of the people is most eminently conspicuous. When Hindostan was first visited by British traders, and long after the union of the two Companies before-mentioned, when the opposition, not only of British subject against British subject, but of European against European, and the corrupt and impolitic attempts which were constantly made by one party, to raise the despotic powers of the Indian States against other parties, had in some measure ceased, the character of the native governments, as well as of the native individuals, remained unchanged; the ill usage which they had received from individual and associated Europeans, roaming about without responsibility or controul, raised a jealousy and animosity against every stranger without distinction, and the internal state of the country, where justice and injustice were equally articles of traffic to be bought and sold, left the rights of persons and property entirely at hazard.

Your Petitioners found the country divided into many different states, all feudatory to the Mogul, who was considered the sole proprietor of the whole. These states were again divided amongst Zemindars and chiefs, with other designations, under whom there were sub-infeudations down to the Ryots, who were the actual cultivators of the soil, and no man held any land, and scarcely a crop, but at the will of another of superior power; there were no effectual means of resort for the support of any right or the avenging any wrong, and the will of the strongest was the only practical rule of conduct which was established. Under the management of your Petitioners, the scene has been entirely changed. By fixing certain permanent and invariable rents, a new and valuable property has been, as it

were, created to the natives. By the establishment of courts of justice, and the appointment of liberal emoluments to those who devote their lives to the study and administration of laws adapted to the usages, customs, and religions of the inhabitants, they have removed temptations to corruption, and have provided the means for the inhabitants to be insured in the enjoyment of property thus created for them. Courts of criminal judicature have also been universally erected, which have effectually provided for personal liberty and security. By the alterations which have taken place, the practical means of foreign commerce, of traffic from port to port and internally, have been facilitated, very greatly to its increase.

That it may not be supposed that your Petitioners have assumed merits which they are not entitled to, they beg leave to refer to the Fifth Report of the Select Committee of this Honourable House on the Affairs of the East India Company, which was presented to this Honourable House on the 28th day of July last.

Notwithstanding the ameliorated condition of the natives of India under the government of your Petitioners, to which they have been accustomed, yet the tranquillity of the country is not maintained by a physical force, but chiefly by moral influence, and in a great degree even by prejudice; any change would alarm them; and their submission to British authority would be greatly endangered by an unrestrained resort of Europeans in search of wealth, either by commerce or other means, at distances from the principal seats of government, or in such numbers at those seats, as to be beyond the controul of the governors; and by the resort of persons who may not have such connection with, and interest to uphold, the authority of the ruling power, as will insure the utmost care in their conduct, not only not to irritate, but positively to conciliate the natives with whom they may have dealings.

Your Petitioners beg leave to represent, that their military establishments, artillery, and marine, have been of other most important advantages to this nation, inasmuch as in the several European wars in which this

society has been engaged since the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the forces of your Petitioners alone, or in conjunction with the forces of His Majesty, at the expence of your Petitioners, have taken all the settlements belonging to the Europeans on the continent of India, with whom this nation has been at war: and such captures have formed part of the price of national peace, without any compensation to your Petitioners: and, upon the suggestion of His Majesty's Ministers, your Petitioners sent a large force from India into Egypt, by the Red Sea, to co-operate with His Majesty's forces against the French, in the year 1801; and, in the present war, by expeditions equipped from India, all the possessions of the French, Dutch, and Danes, in the East, have been conquered: and though, as to such of those expeditions, the accounts of which have been settled, your Petitioners have been allowed considerable sums on the part of the Public, yet such allowances were calculated to reimburse only a part of the vast expenditure actually advanced by your Petitioners for those great national objects.

Your Petitioners humbly hope, they will be found to have been as attentive to, and as successful in the cultivation of the trade with China, as they have been with respect to the concerns in India. The peculiarities of the Chinese, and the delicacy attendant upon any intercourse with them, must be too well known, as matter of history, to every Member of this Honourable House, to require any statement of it in this Petition: it will be sufficient to inform this Honourable House, that it is but a little more than one hundred years since any trade whatever has been carried on between this country and China, and that, at this time, about forty-six thousand tons of shipping are employed by your Petitioners therein, and that your Petitioners entertain in China, for the purposes of that trade, a regular establishment of servants, called supra-cargoes, and others of inferior ranks, whose business it is to keep up a connection with the few merchants, or more properly mercantile officers, of the Chinese government, who are deputed to manage, on the part of the Chinese, all the

commercial transactions between Great Britain and China. By this means the trade has been cherished and preserved through, and notwithstanding, many perils arising from circumstances apparently trivial, and the fatal consequences of which could only have been averted by the most delicate conduct, and by the whole commercial concerns of the British nation being confided to one united authority.

Your Petitioners feel it incumbent upon them to submit to this Honourable House an abstract of their financial operations since the arrangement contained in the above-mentioned act of the thirty-third year of the reign of His present Majesty was made. At that time the capital stock of your Petitioners amounted to the sum of £5,000,000: since that period, in pursuance of an act of Parliament passed for that purpose, the capital stock has been increased by the sum of £1,000,000, contributed by the subscribers at the rate of £200 per cent.

At the time when the act of the thirty-third of His Majesty* was passed, sundry debts, incurred in the defence and protection of the British possessions in India, bearing interest, were then due and owing by your petitioners, amounting to seven millions of pounds sterling, or thereabouts. Since that period the said debt has been very much increased for the same purpose, and great part of such increased debt was raised upon loans, by the terms of which the creditors were entitled to the option of being paid off in India, or by bills of exchange to be drawn upon London; and upon such obligations becoming due, your Petitioners have been obliged to provide, out of their funds and credit at home, the means of paying bills of exchange drawn upon them since the year 1807, to the amount of £10,902,924 sterling in discharge of Indian debt: and the debt contracted for political purposes, now remaining due in India, according to the latest advices from thence, amounts to the sum of £26,000,000, or thereabouts, over and besides the sum of £3,000,000 Re-

* 33 Geo. III., cap. 52, sec. 108.

duced three per cent. Annuities, and the sum of £1,400,000 Consolidated three per cent. Annuities, on which the sum of £2,500,000 sterling was raised, in pursuance of an act passed in the last session of Parliament, to enable your Petitioners to pay bills of exchange which had been drawn upon them from India, in part discharge of the Indian debt, as herein-before mentioned, and also over and besides the sum of £2,202,000, or thereabouts, now owing by your Petitioners upon bills of exchange not yet due, but payable in London, which have been drawn in India, in further part discharge of the said Indian debt.

That the revenues of the territorial acquisitions in India, in the possession of your Petitioners in the year 1793, amounted to the annual sum of £8,000,000, or thereabouts; and, by the latest accounts and estimates received from the East-Indies, the revenues of the territorial acquisitions, now in the possession of your Petitioners, amount to the annual sum of £16,000,000 or thereabouts: but the civil and military expences of the government have proportionably increased.

That the profits of the trade carried on by your Petitioners since the year 1793, to the latest period to which the accounts can be correctly estimated, have amounted to the sum of £6,289,405, over and above the commercial charges of your Petitioners, and beyond the payment of interest on their bond debt in England, and besides the dividends from time to time paid on the capital stock of your Petitioners, according to the directions of the said act of Parliament passed in the thirty-third year of the reign of His present Majesty.

That, in 1793, the bond debt in England of your Petitioners amounted to the sum of £3,200,000, or thereabouts: since which, by an act of Parliament passed in the year 1797*, they have been empowered to raise money, by increasing their capital stock by the amount of £2,000,000; but your Petitioners have not availed themselves of that resource, but under the

* 37 Geo. III. cap. 31.

authority of several acts of Parliament *, they have raised money upon bond, and their bond debt in England now amounts to the sum of £5,409,325; but your Petitioners are entitled by law to issue bonds, to the amount of £7,000,000 in the whole.

That the annual interest upon the present amount of the Indian debt now amounts to the sum of £1,600,000, or thereabouts: and as, by the terms of the loans on which such money was raised, the creditors are entitled to receive their interest by payment of money in India, or by bills of exchange to be drawn and made payable in London, at rates favourable to the holders, and judging from the amount drawn within the last half year, your Petitioners estimate that the annual sum of £1,500,000, or thereabouts, will be necessary to be provided annually in London, for the payment of such interest: besides which, although the several sums of money payable in respect of the reduced and consolidated annuities (on which the said sum of £2,500,000 was raised by virtue of the said act of the last session of Parliament), for interest and sinking fund attendant thereon, amounting altogether to the annual sum of £242,820, are expressly charged upon the revenues of the territorial acquisitions in the East-Indies, yet your Petitioners are bound by the said act, at all events, to pay such sums of money into the Bank of England, in manner in the said act mentioned; and your Petitioners will also be obliged to provide in London the interest and other charges which may be attendant upon any further loan which may be necessary, in consequence of the said further sum of £2,202,000, part of the Indian debt, for which bills of exchange drawn upon your Petitioners are now outstanding; and it is estimated, that political charges (including payments to be made to the creditors of the late Nabobs of the Carnatic) consequential upon the Indian territory, to the annual amount of £910,000,

* 34 Geo. III. cap. 41; 47 Geo. III. cap. 41, sess. 2; 51 Geo. III., cap. .

or thereabouts, will be to be defrayed in England; and as, from the best estimates which can be made, there appears but little reason to expect (without a considerable reduction of the military expences of your Petitioners in India) that there should be any sufficient surplus revenue to be remitted for those purposes, your Petitioners apprehend that the punctual discharge of the pecuniary obligations of your Petitioners, in relation thereto, as well as the payment of the interest upon their bond debt in England, and the dividends on their capital stock, will depend most essentially upon the trade to be carried on by your Petitioners.

That in pursuance of several acts of Parliament since 1807 *, your Petitioners have increased their bond debt in England, by the sum of £2,409,325; and, in pursuance of an act of Parliament passed in the fiftieth year of the reign of His present Majesty, your Petitioners have borrowed Exchequer bills of the public to the amount of £1,500,000; and, by virtue of an act passed in the last session of Parliament, as herein-before mentioned, your Petitioners raised on loan, by way of reduced and consolidated annuities, the sum of £2,500,000: and all such sums of money, together with the said sum of £6,289,405, which has arisen from the surplus profits of the trade carried on by your Petitioners, as herein-before mentioned, have been absorbed, by payment of debts and expences incurred in respect of the territorial acquisitions in India.

That in the expeditions on the part of the British nation against the European enemies of His Majesty, and by advances for His Majesty's navy, and other public services, your Petitioners have incurred very large expences, which, they submit, they are entitled to be reimbursed by the public: and your Petitioners compute, that after allowing such sum as your Petitioners are indebted to the Public for the loan of Exchequer bills, to the amount of £1,500,000, as herein-before

* 47 Geo. III. sess. 2., cap. 41; 51 Geo. III. cap. ; 52 Geo. III. cap. ; 52 Geo. III. cap. 135.

mentioned, pursuant to an act for that purpose passed in the last session of Parliament *, and after allowing such sums as your Petitioners are indebted to His Majesty for troops in India, and for recruiting, the sum of £2,294,426, at the least, will be found due to your Petitioners.

Your Petitioners have now exhibited, they hope with candour, the real situation of their affairs, and of the British trade and relations with the East-Indies and China. Your Petitioners do not presume to offer an opinion, whether any other arrangements, than those which have taken place, would have led to results equally, or more advantageous, than have arisen to their country: but they apprehend it to be quite undeniable, that the privileges entrusted to your Petitioners have produced a large quantity of positive benefit to the British empire; and they submit, that any material change in the Indian system would be matter of experiment, for which there can be no sufficient data from which its success can be calculated.

Your Petitioners feel it to be their duty to express to this Honourable House their sincere opinion, that the public interest cannot be better consulted, than by continuing your Petitioners as the sole organs and channel, both for the trade with and the government of India, upon the principles established by the act of the thirty-third year of His Majesty's reign, with such variations, as to the financial appropriations, and in some other points of detail, as present circumstances require and experience has pointed out. Your Petitioners ask not for an exclusive trade upon the narrow principles of monopoly, for the mere purpose of commercial gain; they have under their care interests of a much more extended and liberal nature, which it is their duty to attend to. Your Petitioners are ready to become parties to any arrangement, which shall be consistent with the rights of your Petitioners and the security of British India, and which will not deprive your Petitioners of the means of fulfilling their pecuniary en-

* 50 Geo. III. cap. 135; 52 Geo. III. cap. .

gagements with the Public and individuals, or the performance of the functions which may be continued or allotted to them. They hope they will not be deemed presumptuous, in humbly submitting their opinion, considered and reconsidered, that the opening of the trade with China, in any degree, would endanger its existence altogether; and your Petitioners have, at no time, contemplated any alteration even in the export trade to the East-Indies, without considerable doubt and hesitation: but your Petitioners are firmly of opinion, that the unrestrained liberty of importation from that country, otherwise than through the medium of the establishments of your Petitioners in London, would produce effects, which every well-wisher to his country must deprecate, and which would put to extreme hazard any pledge, on the part of your Petitioners, for the good government of India or the performance of their obligations. Your Petitioners submit, that they would not be justified in becoming parties to any system, which, on consideration, should appear to them likely to prove an illusion.

As your Petitioners do not venture to anticipate what may be the determination of this Honourable House upon the question hereby submitted to its decision, your Petitioners hope, that they will be excused for humbly stating what, in the event of the dissolution of the present system, they conceive would be found to be the rights of your Petitioners, as well as their fair pretensions upon the justice and liberality of Parliament. The absolute right of your Petitioners, for their own use, to a considerable part of the forts, towns, islands, territories, and rights, which they have acquired abroad, never has been questioned, and your Petitioners believe it to be unquestionable; and notwithstanding the claim made for the Public to other parts of the territorial acquisitions and revenues of your Petitioners, they entertain a strong hope, that the property, as well in those parts which were acquired by conquest, under the powers of peace and war lawfully exercised by your Petitioners, as in those parts which were otherwise acquired, would be found to belong to

your Petitioners, in the same way as any other property within His Majesty's dominions belongs to the owners thereof, subject to the sovereignty and allegiance due to His Majesty: but even supposing it should be determined, contrary to the sense and expectations of your Petitioners touching their rights, that those places were not the property of your Petitioners, your Petitioners submit, that, in that case, if the possession were to be assumed on the part of the Public, your Petitioners would have a just right to reimbursement of the expences which they have incurred in acquiring and maintaining them, and in making the fortifications, and civil and military buildings and works which your Petitioners have erected and improved upon them, with a compensation for the services and risk of your Petitioners, during the long time which they have had the possession and government of such territories, under the confirmation of Parliament, and all other charges incurred by your Petitioners relative to such territories. These expences and charges amount to many millions of money. Your Petitioners also submit, that they have a just claim to be reimbursed all the sums they have paid, in discharge of debts contracted on account of the territories, and to be indemnified against all other debts in respect of them, and which now remain undischarged.

Your Petitioners do not question, as an abstract principle, the right of any of His Majesty's subjects, to trade with any part of His Majesty's dominions; but your Petitioners humbly submit, that it cannot be contended, that any persons can have a right, except with the consent of your Petitioners, to use the settlements, factories, and seats of trade, or to avail themselves of the means and facilities, moral and physical, which your Petitioners, at a great expence and risk, have created or acquired, and now, at great current charge, maintain, for the purposes of commerce and civil intercourse.

Your Petitioners, therefore, most humbly pray, that this Honourable House will take the premises into its consideration, and make such

provision, as in its wisdom, it shall see fit, for continuing the government of the territorial acquisitions in the East-Indies in your Petitioners, and for settling the trade to the East-Indies and China and other places, from the Cape of Good Hope to the Streights of Magellan, according to the present system; or that your Petitioners may have such relief in the premises as their case may require.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

Copy of a further Petition from the EAST-INDIA COMPANY *to the Honorable* HOUSE OF COMMONS.

To the Honorable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled,

The humble Petition of the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East-Indies,

SHEWETH:

That loans of very large sums of money have heretofore been raised in India, on the credit of your Petitioners, for the defence and protection of the British possessions there, by the terms of which loans the creditors were entitled to the option of being paid off in India, or by bills of exchange to be drawn upon London; and upon, and in consequence of such obligations becoming due, bills to the amount of £13,104,924 have been drawn, since the year 1807, upon your Petitioners, payable in London, and the sum of £10,902,924, part of the said sum of £13,104,924, has been discharged by your Petitioners,

and £2,202,000, residue thereof, now remains outstanding, and the larger part of the bills drawn for the same will become due previous to the month of March 1814.

That, for the purpose of enabling your Petitioners to pay the said bills of exchange which they have so discharged to the amount of £10,902,924 they borrowed Exchequer bills of the Public, to the amount of £1,500,000 in pursuance of an act of parliament passed in the fiftieth year of the reign of His present Majesty, entitled, "An Act for granting to His Majesty a sum "of Money to be raised by Exchequer Bills, and to "be advanced and applied, in the Manner and upon "the Terms therein mentioned, for the Relief of the "United Company of Merchants of England trading "to the East Indies:" and your Petitioners also raised the sum of £2,500,000 upon reduced three pounds per centum, annuities and consolidated three pounds per centum annuities, respectively, transferable at the Bank of England, in pursuance of an act of parliament made and passed in the fifty-second year of His Majesty's reign, entitled, "An Act for advancing £2,500,000 to "the East-India Company, to enable them to dis-"charge part of the Indian Debt."

That, by another act of parliament, made and passed in the fifty-second year of the reign of His present Majesty, entitled, "An Act to amend an Act of the fif-"tieth year of His present Majesty, for granting a "Sum of Money to be raised by Exchequer Bills, to "be advanced and applied, in the manner and upon "the terms therein mentioned, for the Relief of the "United Company of Merchants of England, trading "to the East Indies," it is enacted, that it shall be lawful for the Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury or any three or more of them, to carry to the credit of your Petitioners, in repayment of the sums advanced under the provisions of the said act of parliament of the fiftieth year of the reign of His present Majesty, any sum or sums of money which should have been advanced or disbursed by your Petitioners in the East Indies for His Majesty's navy or any public services.

That your Petitioners compute, that, after allowing in account such sum as your Petitioners are indebted to His Majesty for the loan of the said Exchequer Bills, that the sum of £2,294,426 at the least, is now due to your Petitioners, in respect of money which has been advanced or disbursed by your Petitioners in the East Indies for His Majesty's navy and other public services.

That, by virtue of an act of parliament passed in the thirty-seventh year of the reign of His present Majesty, entitled, "An Act to enable the East-India Company "to raise money by further increasing their capital "stock, and to extend the provisions now existing, "respecting the present stock of the Company, to the "said increased stock," your Petitioners are now authorized to raise money by increasing their capital stock by the sum of £2,000,000 but your Petitioners have not raised any money in exercise of the powers contained in the said act.

That your Petitioners are now authorised by law to raise money in England upon bonds, to the amount of seven millions, and your Petitioners have now issued bonds to the amount of £5,409,325 and are at liberty to issue further bonds to the further amount of £1,590,675: and by an act passed in the fifty-first year of the reign of His present Majesty, entitled, "An Act to enable the East India Company to raise "a further sum of money upon bond, instead of in-"creasing their capital stock, and to alter and amend "an act passed in the forty-seventh year of the reign "of His present Majesty relative thereto," it is provided, that when your Petitioners shall have raised, under and by virtue of the said act of the thirty-seventh year of the reign of His present Majesty, and of the said act of the forty-seventh year of the reign of His present Majesty and of that act, such sums of money as together should amount to the sum of four millions sterling, from thenceforth it should not be lawful for your Petitioners to raise any further sum of money upon bond; and all money which, from thenceforth, should be raised by in-

crease of capital stock, under and by virtue of the said first-mentioned act, should be applied in discharge of the said bond debt, until the said bond debt, created by virtue of the said act of the forty-seventh year of the reign of his Majesty, or of that act, together with the money to be raised by increase of capital as aforesaid, should be reduced to the sum of four millions sterling.

That, upon an estimate of the probable receipts and payments of your Petitioners in England, including amongst the receipts the said sum of £2,294,426 so due from the Public to your Petitioners, as herein-before mentioned, it appears that it will be advantageous and necessary to the concerns of your Petitioners, that they should be authorised to raise the sum of £2,500,000 on loan, in a different manner from that in which they may now raise money, for the purpose of enabling them to discharge the said bills of exchange, to the amount of £2,202,000 drawn in liquidation of the Indian debt, to provide for their other current payments, and to enable your Petitioners, as circumstances may render it advisable, to reduce the amount of their bond debt, without increasing their capital stock.

Your Petitioners therefore most humbly pray, that this Honourable House will be pleased to direct the payment of the said sum of £2,294,426 so due by the Public to your Petitioners, as herein-before is mentioned, and to grant to your Petitioners such relief in the premises, as to this Honourable House shall seem meet.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

REPORT *of the* COMMITTEE *of* CORRESPONDENCE *of the* EAST-INDIA COMPANY, *dated 9th February* 1813.

The President of the India Board having, in his recent letter of the 4th January, referred the Court to the petitions presented to Parliament in the course of last session, from the Merchants and Manufacturers connected with the Outports, for fuller information than had been then imparted to the Court, concerning the representations which had induced His Majesty's Ministers to be of opinion, that the import trade from the East-Indies should not be confined to the Port of London, your Committee determined on examining those petitions, as they stand recorded in the votes of the House of Commons. But, in going into this task, your Committee found, that it involved a review of all the petitions lately preferred against a renewal of the Company's Charter, because the arguments in favour of the Outports were interspersed through them. The whole of those petitions have, therefore, been perused; and one remark, which immediately presents itself on that perusal,—a remark entitled, in the opinion of your Committee, to particular attention,—is, that those arguments in behalf of the Outports are, in a very material degree, the arguments which are directly urged for the abolition of the whole of the Company's exclusive commercial privileges; and the claims of the Outports are contended for, as a part of the entire freedom in the Eastern trade, which is demanded for all the subjects of the empire. The places, especially, which are strictly Outports, proceed in their petitions upon principles which arraign every species and degree of monopoly; and it is chiefly from those principles that they deduce, as a consequence, the right of the Outports to a free participation in Indian imports. But as, in the deliberate and just opinion of His Majesty's Ministers, those principles and argu-

ments are not valid for the main claim of the Petitioners, it is to be presumed, that neither can they, in the same opinion, be valid for the subordinate claim of the Outports, so far as it is rested on the same foundations, which, however, are the foundations built on by the generality of the Petitions. The few remaining arguments on this question, relate, principally, to the facility and certainty with which the revenue may be collected at the Outports, and to the safety with which the honourable men, composing the commercial class of this country, may be admitted to all the settlements and countries of the East. But these are mere assertions of opinion, to be classed with the "untried theories" of the time, and, as far as the light of experience goes, opposed by it. If they were even proved, which they are in no degree, they would not, by any means, satisfy all the great interests abroad and at home, which are involved in the question of the Outports; and therefore your Committee are entirely at a loss to discover, how the arguments in favour of those ports, as they stand in the petitions to Parliament, resting chiefly on principles which His Majesty's Government do not admit, have so presented themselves to the Ministers, as, in their view, "to establish "a claim against an absolute restriction of the import "trade to the port of London;" or how, from the *ex-parte* representations of those petitions, which proceed on the demand of an entire liberty of trade to India and China, a demand resisted by His Majesty's Government, any clear definite idea is to be obtained of that degree of "liberty of trade, which the merchants may enjoy, "without injury to other important national interests." And hence your Committee humbly conceive, that this problem, so important in its nature, namely, the measure of further liberty which may be safely granted, still remains to be solved, and requires deliberate and accurate investigation.

These remarks may, perhaps, receive some confirmation, from the succinct view which your Committee, enlarging somewhat their first design, are now about to submit, of the principal matters contained in

the petitions for the abolition of the Company's commercial privileges, and of the answers to which they are obviously liable. Although the same allegations, which are thus urged, have often been combated, it may be proper, on account of the channel in which they now come forward, and of the publicity of the present discussion, to give some distinct reply to them, which will, at least, further evince the disposition of the Court to shrink from no charge, and to shun no inquiry.

All the material objections which appear in those petitions to the renewal of the Company's charter, may be comprised under the following heads:—

1st.—That commercial monopolies, especially if extensive and long continued, are, in their nature, and according to the experience of past ages, inexpedient, impolitic, and unjust; and that the monopoly of a joint stock company must be managed with negligence, waste, and prodigality, unlikely to be practised by private merchants. (Some of the petitions admit, that monopolies may be tolerated in the beginnings of trade.)

2d.—That the monopoly of the East-India Company has been injurious to the nation, great evils having resulted from it:—that it is inadequate to an extended trade; has locked up national capital; has retarded improvement; has not advanced trade, nor carried it to many countries within the Company's limits:—that it cools the ardour of generous and liberal competition; has deprived the woollen manufacturers of Gloucester, Wiltshire, Exeter, Shrewsbury, and the manufactures of other places; some, of supplying an immense population; others, of preparing articles for China, on lower terms than the Company allow; others, of carrying on trade with India and the countries north of it; others of receiving orders, infinitely beyond what they now obtain from the East-India Company:—that it is (particularly in the opinion of the Staffordshire potters) unfavourable to the introduction of *new articles*:—

that its exports to the East do not amount to a fifth of the exports of this country to America:—that all ideas of participation in the profits of a monopoly trade, by payment into the Exchequer, ever will be vain and illusory; of which the disappointment of the nation, in regard to the Company, is a complete illustration:—that the intention of opening the trade will be frustrated, by leaving the Company any controul over private trade:—that it is proved, by undeniable documents, that if the trade be allowed to remain under its present restrictions, it will languish, decay, and pass into the hands of other states:—that it must, if continued, *diminish* the sources of private wealth and national revenue:—that the reasonings in favour of the monopoly proceed from narrow, partial views, have been demonstrated fallacious, and will apply equally to every other branch of British commerce:—that it is humiliating to individuals, degrading to the national character, and a national grievance.

3d.—That, notwithstanding the *increase* of the Company's territories, their trade has *decreased*, though protected from enemies and hostile rivalry:—that, since the renewal of the Charter in 1793, they have added greatly to their debt:—that the pecuniary participation held out to the country in 1793, has not been realized, but has been converted by the East India Company into repeated claims on the public purse and credit, for enormous sums to support their establishments; and that further, and still greater pecuniary assistance is now required, to avert embarrassments, in which they may be soon involved.

4th.—That a full and free right to trade to and with all countries and people in amity with His Majesty, and more particularly those countries *acquired and maintained by the efforts and valour of the forces of His Majesty*, is naturally the undoubted birthright and inheritance of the people of this empire, of every subject of it, and every

port in it; and that the unrestrained exercise of that right is essentially necessary to the maintenance of the manufacturers, and prosperity of the commerce of this country:—that the confinement of the Eastern trade to the port of London, would be a violation of that right, at once unnecessary, unjust, and impolitic:—unnecessary, because the duties may be collected with greater ease and less loss by pilferage in the Outports, the taxes on West-Indian and American produce being now collected with known safety:—unjust, because every mercantile place in the United Kingdom is entitled to the same privileges:—and impolitic, because the superior economy and dispatch that prevail in the Outports, are requisite to secure an equality with foreign nations. In these claims for the Outports, there is a general concurrence in the petitions from Plymouth, Glasgow, Paisly, Dundee, Arbroath, Leith, Edinburgh, Belfast, Bristol, Liverpool, and Hull; of which three last mentioned places Bristol and Liverpool state, that they have, in contemplation of the opening of the trade to India, enlarged their docks; and Hull, that there should be no restraint as to the size of vessels to be admitted into the Indian trade.

5th. That no satisfactory reason can be assigned, why the trade to China should not be opened:—that the difficulty apprehended in collecting the tea duties is ideal:—that the British character forbids injurious suspicions, as to inconveniences in India and China from opening the trade:—that, in the avowed opinion of one set of petitioners, the merchants of this country should be allowed to trade directly from the East to the British West-Indies; and another set claim, that the products of the East shall, without being first landed in this kingdom, be transported to the British West-Indies, the American colonies, and all other countries south of Cape Finisterre, and within the Mediterranean.

6th. That the existing monopoly has, contrary

to reason and justice, led to a singular peculiarity, —the concession of privileges to foreign nations in amity with his Majesty, which are rigorously denied to merchants of the British empire; or, according to others, that the trade is open to *all the world* except British merchants:—that the American States have long enjoyed this trade, at the expence of our own people, employing British capital, and compelling the Company to shrink from competition:—that they have engrossed a great part of this trade, and also of that to China, which the Company formerly possessed:—that the American merchants, being unfettered, have undersold the Company in the markets of Europe, have deprived them of those markets, and also the markets of South America, the West Indies, the Mediterranean, and Malta, whilst the English trade has become less extensive and profitable:—that the example of the citizens of the United States, who have evinced the superiority of individual industry, when opposed to the negligence and prodigality of a joint stock company, and the delays and abuses of their concerns, proves the competency of British individuals to carry on an extensive commerce to the East Indies, China, and other countries within the Charter of the Company:—that the monopoly is favorable to foreigners, injurious to British subjects, and its abolition necessary, to enable British merchants to meet neutrals, and other foreigners, in fair competition with the products of the East in their own markets: or, at least, according to others, that British subjects should be put on a footing with foreigners in this trade.

7th. That the distresses and privations of the manufacturing and trading classes (distresses aggravated, say some, by the monopoly of the East India Company), under the continental system of Bonaparte, the disputes with America, the exclusion from usual markets, the stagnation or decline of trade, are grievous:—that the mercantile, ma-

nufacturing, and shipping interests, all suffer :—that the country is burthened with great naval and military establishments :—and that, under such hardships, pressures, and exclusions, every possible relief is wanted, and new sources of trade ought to be looked for ; and that, on account of the existing war, and for the maintenance of our naval superiority, and the preservation of our commercial, maritime, and financial interests, an open trade is necessary.

8th. That it is a well ascertained fact, that during the time of the Protectorate, there were men who boldly violated the Company's Charter, and carried on the trade with such success, that they were able to sell the commodities of the East in the different markets of Europe, on lower terms than had ever been known ; and, at this day, individual merchants have traded to India with profit, even under all the difficulties, delays, and taxes imposed upon them by the Company :—that the private trade has continued to increase, although fettered with many restrictions; but that these restrictions deter people, unacquainted with India, and residing at home, from engaging in the trade :—that a free trade to the East would be a measure admirably calculated for removing present evils, would be a substitute for the loss of European commerce, an equivalent for all other markets, and would necessarily open new and extensive markets; a field greater than any other country offers, and beyond the grasp of the enemy ; a field to British skill, industry, and enterprize, and to capital, otherwise useless, whilst the national resources are stunted :—that thousands, who are now reduced to idleness and poverty, might be actively engaged :—that the capital, spirit, and *knowledge* of British merchants, are unbounded :—that a free trade to India would turn the wealth acquired by the foreign merchant into the pockets of the subjects of this country; would excite a fair emulation to bring all the produce of the East to its proper level in the home market, to the great benefit of this

country; would enable our manufacturers, with more advantage, to exert their skill and industry to produce new articles of trade, and to give full employment to the operative classes of the community: would circulate the trade, now confined to London, through every part of the United Kingdom; would be the means of increasing our maritime strength, our financial resources, and the wealth and glory of the British Empire.

Such is the general tenor of the petitions on this head; but the language of the one from Sheffield is so animated and sanguine, that it may not be improper to transcribe a part of it.

"The petitioners are fully persuaded, if the trade
" to the East Indies were thrown open to all His
" Majesty's subjects, such new and abundant mar-
" kets, would be discovered and established, as
" would enable them to set at defiance every ef-
" fort to injure them, by that sworn enemy to
" their prosperity and the peace of Europe, the
" present unprincipled ruler of France; and that
" the petitioners doubt not, if the trade of this
" United Kingdom were permitted to flow unim-
" peded over those extensive, luxuriant, and opu-
" lent regions, though it might, in the outset, like
" a torrent repress and swoln by obstruction, when
" its sluices were first opened, break forth with
" uncontroulable impetuosity, deluging, instead
" of supplying the district before it, yet that very
" violence, which, at the beginning, might be
" partially injurious, would, in the issue, prove
" highly and permanently beneficial; no part be-
" ing unvisited, the waters of commerce, that
" spread over the face of the land, as they sub-
" sided, would wear themselves channels, through
" which they might continue to flow ever after-
" wards, in regular and fertilizing streams; and
" that, to the wealthy, enterprizing, honorable,
" and indefatigable British merchant, conducting
" in person his own concerns, no obstacle would
" prove insurmountable, no prejudice invincible,
" no difficulty disheartening: wants, where he

" found them, he would supply; where they did
" not exist, he would create them, by affording
" the means of gratification."

9th. That the imagined hardship of depriving the Company of the only lucrative branch of their trade, that to China, will be alleviated, by the wealth, influence, knowledge, and experience, which, in their united capacity, they will still be enabled to oppose to the unassisted efforts of private merchants;—that if, indeed, the Company can carry on trade to greater advantage than the private merchant, they have nothing to fear; they will reap their merited reward by the benefit of competition; and without competition, neither would commerce have risen to its present standard, nor will it increase to bear the increasing expences of the nation:—And with respect to the danger of excessive speculation, it is said by Glasgow to be imaginary, because the enterprize of individuals is uniformly limited by their means and success; because any evil of this nature is temporary, and checks itself; and that, *the very worst that can occur, in the event of the abandonment of the trade by the public, would be, that matters would again return to their present state.* On all the grounds, therefore, stated in the petitions, they in general require a full and entire freedom of trade to the Eastward of the Cape of Good Hope, including China, and all the countries within the Charter of the East India Company: *and, for the means of indemnifying or remunerating the claims of the Company,* one petition proposes, "*a fair and equal impost on the trade in question.*"

Your Committee having thus submitted an abstract, under different heads, of the contents of the petitions, in which abstract, they are persuaded, nothing material is omitted, will now proceed to offer some observations on each of those heads.

And *first*,—With regard to the doctrine of monopolies in general, your Committee do not conceive, that they are much called upon to enter into any discussion

of it; because, what is termed the monopoly of the East India Company is, as it now exists and has long existed, an institution of a singular nature, formed upon principles peculiar to itself, not merely or chiefly for the purposes of trade, and must be examined with reference to the ends of its institution, and the importance of those ends, which will be the subject of the next article. In the mean time, it may be observed upon this first head, that the ablest writers on political economy, and the most strenuous against monopolies, have not condemned them simply and universally, as most of the petitions now in question do. Even Dr. Adam Smith acquiesces in the establishment of the chartered Banks of England and Scotland, which are species of monopoly; and he praises the Act of Navigation, which is founded on the principle of exclusive privilege. He admits, also, the propriety of a temporary monopoly of new machines and new books; and what is more immediately to the present purpose, he grants, in agreement with Montesquieu and others, as some of the petitioners seem also candidly to allow, that "when "a company of merchants (to use his own words) un- "dertake at their own risk and expense, to establish a "new trade with some remote and barbarous nation, it "may not be unreasonable to incorporate them into a "joint stock company, and to grant them a mono- "poly, in case of their success, for a certain number "of years. It is the easiest and most natural way in "which a State can recompence them for hazarding a "dangerous and expensive experiment, of which the "public is afterwards to reap the benefit." But, even in this proposition, it may be observed, that the interests of the two parties, the company of merchants and the public, seem scarcely to be equally cared for. The privilege given by the State is a privilege for its own benefit, which is to cost it nothing, should the experiment fail: and of which it is to enjoy the permanent advantage, if the experiment succeed. It is safe from loss; and besides its share of what present advantage there may be, is to have ultimately the fee-simple of all the gain that may result. Undoubtedly, in this case,

the terms of enjoyment by the merchants, after all the season of hazard and vicissitude is past, should be ample; and it were to be wished, that those who are now so eager to take gratuitous possession of all the commercial establishments, formed at such immense risks and expence by the East-India Company, would consider more equitably than the language of their petition does, the fair claims of a body, even if regarded merely in a commercial light, who have hitherto been working through a long series of time, of difficulties, and dangers, to the vast benefit of the nation, whilst their own fair compensation yet remains to be obtained.

Secondly.—With respect to that species of exclusive privilege, called the East-India Company's monopoly, your Committee cannot begin their remarks upon the accusations brought against it, without lamenting the surprising want of information which the generality of the petitioners discover, relative to the Company's system, conduct, and affairs; and, your Committee are compelled to add, a mortifying defect of attention, also, regarding things that could not possibly be unknown to the petitioners. They treat the whole question of the *monopoly*, as if it were purely a commercial question; as if it involved no higher question of policy; as if it stood unconnected with the acquisition, the government, and the preservation of a great Indian empire; and as if, from its political relations, the question concerning it had no bearing on the British constitution. Thus, say some of the petitioners, "the "reasonings in favour of the monopoly proceed from "narrow, partial views, demonstrated to be fallacious, "and which will apply equally to every other branch "of British commerce;" whereas it is abundantly obvious, that the exclusive commercial privileges enjoyed by the Company in the Indian trade (however well entitled they are to them on other accounts), are contended for by them, and have been continued by the Legislature, mainly because deemed to be necessary for the political government of India, and not at all on account of any pecuniary participation, which one of the

petitions erroneously assumes to be now in question. The same cause, also, was understood to require the continuance of the China monopoly, though that privilege stands upon other irrefragable grounds, as the unlimited admission of British ships into any quarter of the Eastern Seas could not be thought compatible with the system adopted for the security of our eastern territorial possessions. The commercial monopoly therefore is, in a word, an instrument in the hands of the Company, for the political government of India. Such, it has been maintained by them, and admitted by Ministers, in the discussions respecting the Charter, to be; but this great truth, either as a fact or as a principle, is unnoticed in the petitions. Some of the petitioners are, indeed, so just as to recollect, that the India Company have territorial rights, and to say that it is not their wish to trench on them; but they do not seem to be aware, that those rights can be enjoyed only through the medium of commercial privileges, or that any provision can be made for securing them, compatibly with their own claims for an universal opening of the Eastern trade. The petitioners proceed, not only as if the renewal of the priviliges in the Indian trade were merely a question of commerce, but as if it were a question of strict monopoly, such as was agitated in King William's time. To the admission given to private merchants into the Indian trade by the act of 1793, enlarged by the arrangement of 1802, and in practice occasionally still further extended (not to speak of the considerable privileges enjoyed by the commanders and officers of the Company's ships), the petitioners do not advert, except to blame the Company for the alleged inefficiency of all those concessions, which, in reality, greatly relaxed the monopoly, and made it what the late Lord Melville called a regulated, or qualified monopoly. In thus censuring the Company, the petitioners resort to some representations formerly brought against them, and sufficiently answered on their part; except in respect to the irregular dispatch of the extra ships from India, a matter originating with the governments there from the political circumstances of the times; but that contro-

versy is now past, and quite irrelevant to the present state of things; for another point to be held up to particular attention is, that the Company have lately acquiesced in vastly larger concessions, that is, in a general trade between the United Kingdom and India, through the port of London. Yet this new and great change in the Indian system, the petitioners too generally overlook. That it has ever attracted their notice, is only to be inferred from their contending, that the trade shall be general to all the ports of the kingdom; but in their attacks upon the Company, they act as if the whole original structure of the monopoly were still standing and obstinately defended, and when the Company acquiesce in large relaxations, the petitioners nevertheless persist in charging them with all the evils of the most rigid monopoly, for the purpose, as it would seem, of aggravating the case against the Company in the eyes of Parliament and of the public, and strengthening the prejudices, which so much pains have been taken to diffuse. Thus the political part of the Company's system, and its intimate connection with the commerce, is left entirely out of sight; and the present state of the Company's commercial privileges is not accurately represented, nor the actual state of the question, concerning the future measure of those privileges, fairly brought into view.

But it ought to be again and again pressed upon the public attention, that the first and great object, in any new arrangement for India, is not commercial, but political; and that the safe and beneficial administration of that empire is a consideration paramount to all others. No one has denied, either that the Company have conducted, and do conduct the administration, to the great improvement of the security and happiness of the vast population that empire contains; or that the government of it should remain with them, and consequently that the means requisite to enable them to continue to execute so great a trust, should also be afforded. The nature and extent of those means form, therefore, the precise question now at issue: but on this important point, as has been already intimated, the petitions in

general are quite silent, and the propositions contained in them go to deprive the Company wholly of those means, particularly the monopoly of the China trade, the reasons for continuing which will be explained in a subsequent head.

With regard to the effects of the monopoly on the manufactures, trade, and other interests of this country, if any thing said in these days to the discredit of the Company would occasion surprize, it would be the representations given in the petitions on that head. The Company are accused of obstructing the export of the manufactures of this country, even by some (with an honourable exception of the rest) of those woollen manufacturers, who have owed their chief employment to the Company's commissions, continued for the benefit of the nation, under a certainty of deriving no profit from the exported article.

Of those "undeniable documents," by which one of the petitions, in an authoritative style, affirms, "it is "proved, that if the trade be allowed to remain under "its present restrictions, it will languish, decay, and "pass into the hands of other states; that the mono-"poly must, if continued, *diminish* the resources of "private wealth and of national revenue;" your Committee have never heard, and they cannot conceive, that any such documents exist. It is more probable, that the petitioners have put their own sense upon the statements of the Company, which furnish the most authentic materials in this case, and if fairly examined, with a reference to other relative circumstances, will lead to conclusions directly opposite. The subject of the American trade to India, which seems chiefly alluded to, will be discussed in the sequel. That trade, as will hereafter more fully appear, has owed its increase essentially to the state of war, in which this nation has been placed for a long series of years past. If the American trade with India were still going on, a much easier and juster remedy for the alleged evils of it could be found, than the extinction of the Company's remaining commercial privileges. But these heavy forebodings are pronounced, when America, and every

European nation (the distressed one of Portugal excepted) are actually wholly excluded from the Indian Seas.

There seems to be a general and deplorable delusion, respecting the practicability of a vast extension of the sale of the manufactures of this country in India and China, and of the productions of those countries here. This question will be the immediate object of a following article; but your Committee may, in the mean time, confidently say, that the Company have, in a long course of years, made more numerous, persevering, costly experiments, in attempting to push the vent of British commodities, particularly woollens and metals, in the east, than the means, the resources, the safety of private merchants, are likely to enable them to make. The Correspondence of the Company with their servants abroad, at different periods, on this interesting concern, would fill many volumes. That the East-India Company, far from impeding the prosperity of the country, as the petitions, in opposition to history and experience, allege, have, by means of their monopoly, essentially, contributed to its wealth and its greatness, it will be much more easy to shew than to discover, accurately, where the limit of the advantages resulting from their institution is to be fixed. They gave a very early impulse to the manufactures and trade of this country. They opened a new commerce, not with the East only, but, by means of their returns from thence, with foreign Europe. They soon increased the shipbuilding, and improved the navigation of the kingdom; both which they have in latter times, carried to a degree of advancement, that has made their fleets serviceable in the wars of the nation, and the commanders successful, in adding to the naval glory of their country. Against the jealous rivalship of the Portuguese and Dutch, they, through a long course of hostilities from a superior force, maintained for this nation a share in the Indian trade; they preserved it from being totally lost, amidst all the convulsions of the civil wars; they outlived even the more dangerous innovations of subsequent periods; they upheld in India, the national in-

terests, against the ambitious designs of European enemies, and the despotic violence of native powers; and, in a long and arduous struggle, maintained, with little exception, at their own expence, they acquired a territorial empire for the mother country, which exalted its rank in the scale of nations. They have, since, expelled every European nation, except our ally of Portugal, from the Indian Continent and Ocean; and they have given a better government, to an immensely extended empire, than the East ever saw before.

In all this progress, not the ability and wisdom of their civil servants only have been conspicuous, but the talents and valour of their military officers have signally added to the glory and renown of the British nation. By those officers a grand army has been formed of native troops, in discipline, attachment, and efficiency, a just subject of admiration; and from the time of the first Clive downward, the exploits performed by the Company's military servants in India equal, in brilliancy, those recorded in any period of modern history.

To all these public benefits is to be added the direct wealth, with which the Company have been the means of enriching the nation. The amount of these contributions, consisting in the profits of manufacturers, ship-builders and tradesmen, ship-owners and officers, servants and labourers, miners, re-exporters of Eastern productions to foreign parts, and other descriptions of persons gaining by the Company's trade, in dividends to proprietors, payments to Government, and the influx of private fortunes acquired in India, especially in the last fifty-five years, may perhaps be moderately estimated at one hundred millions sterling. Such are the injuries, the grievances, the evils,—such the degradation, which the East-India Company have brought on the country!

Thirdly.—The charges under the third head are nothing more than groundless accusations, calculated to render the Company unpopular; and, except the first article, which is new, have been often answered. As to this article, it is not true that, on the whole, the

Company's imports have decreased, although the sales have, in some years, fallen off, by the exclusion of British commodities from the European Continent; an evil common to all the merchants of this country, but now the occasion of a charge against the Company. And what virtue can the expulsion of enemies and rivals from the Indian Seas have to increase trade, if, when merchandize is brought to Europe, there is only a tardy and diminished sale for it? Again, is it a thing of course, that recently acquired provinces, impoverished, unsettled, containing a people every way dissimilar to us, should purchase our commodities, when the inhabitants of other parts of Hindostan, where we have been settled for ages, have still so little relish for them? The stipulation in the Act of 1793, for a pecuniary participation by the Public, was a conditional stipulation, depending on a contingency, which has never become a reality, but in one year, that immediately following the last renewal of the Charter. The long war, in which, with hardly any intermission, this country has been engaged, ever since 1793, has, by increasing the Company's expences, beyond the most extravagant supposition that could have been previously formed on that head, absorbed all the expected sources of accumulation. Of this, every Administration since 1794 has been sensible; but the same utterly groundless charge continues to be repeated. This "promised participation," say some of the petitions, "has been converted by the "Company into repeated claims on the public purse "and credit for enormous sums, to support their esta-"blishments:" a most unfounded statement. The Company have never had occasion to apply for aid to support their establishments; their applications to Parliament have either been in consequence of levies by Government on the score of participation in the territorial revenues, or for reimbursement of immense sums expended for the State in military expeditions, sums very tardily acknowledged, and not yet fully paid: or to enable the Company to meet the transfer of Indian territorial debt to this country; a debt not in-

creased by their order, or according to their wish, though the petitions charge the increase to them, but sanctioned by His Majesty's Government and by Parliament; a debt, which, every intelligent person knows, it never was, or can be possible, in the nature of things, to discharge out of the Company's commercial funds, and therefore most unjustly made a ground of accusation against them.

Fourthly.—The claim to a full and free trade, as the right, by birth and inheritance, of every subject of this realm, and the arguments in favor of extending it to the Outports, are contained under the fourth head.

With regard to the general position on which the arguments are founded, little need be said. It is an obvious principle, that men, living in society, must submit to the laws of the society, and to restraints upon their natural liberty, when the public interest, in the opinion of the legislative authority, requires it. The Indian monopoly was at first established, because it was thought beneficial to the commercial interests of the country. It was long continued on the same principle: now it is more a political than a commercial question. It may be stated thus: Whether it be more for the interest of the nation, to maintain the Indian empire under the system which has hitherto preserved and improved it,—a system greatly relaxed as to the trade with India, and which has also preserved a lucrative commercial intercourse with China,—or to adopt a system of entirely free commercial communication with both countries, at the hazard of losing that empire and the China trade, or of rendering the tranquillity and retention of the one, and the enjoyment of the other, less secure? Until this question, or one reduced to still lower terms, namely, Whether it would be prudent, for the sake of the object in view, to run any hazard, where the stake is so great? is solved in favor of an open trade, the plea of natural inherent right has no title to be heard. No such solution has yet been produced. It has, on the contrary, been shewn, that dangers and disadvantages, both in the East and at home, would attend the opening of the

trade; but it has not been shown, that any measures, which have been suggested as preventives, would be at all effectual. No adequate provision, therefore, against those dangers and disadvantages is yet proposed; hence, it may fairly be presumed, none has been found. But, until such a remedy is discovered, the present system ought not to be overturned. The opening of the Outports would, according to the unanswered reasonings of the Court, have this effect. The opening of a part of the Outports would lead to the same effect, though perhaps by a somewhat slower progress; for it would immediately reduce and derange the periodical public sales of the Company, which is the master-wheel in the mechanism of their import trade. His Majesty's Ministers, in not proposing to open all the Outports, both admit the contingency of danger from such a measure, and set aside the argument of universal inherent right: but it remains utterly unproved, that danger would not result from opening even a few Outports, especially if the export trade is allowed to all; and that, after any had been so privileged, which would be in effect a monopoly against the rest, those others would ever be quiet, until they also were admitted; so that the whole of the danger will follow from the first step, and ought to be contemplated accordingly. It may just be observed, that the quality ascribed to certain countries, as giving the petitioners more particularly a right to a free trade with them, the quality of having been "acquired "and maintained by the efforts and valour of the "forces of His Majesty," properly appertains neither to Hindostan nor to China, and that the territories held by the Company were acquired under exclusive powers and privileges received from the Legislature.

Upon the same ground of natural inherent right, and of the necessity of the exercise of that right, as essential to the maintenance of the manufactures and commercial prosperity of the country, is placed the claim of the Outports to a free importation of goods from India and China. Under the fourth head, therefore, your Committee have collected the strength of

the arguments contained in the petitions in support of this claim; arguments to which the President of the India Board was pleased to refer the Court. The argument of inherent right has been already considered: the other arguments, which may be given in the words of the Glasgow petition, are, "that the "confinement of the Indian imports to the port of "London would be unnecessary, impolitic, and un- "just:—unnecessary, because, first, the ideal diffi- "culty of collecting the taxes is fully obviated, by "the known safety with which the duties are levied "on articles of West-Indian and American produce; "and secondly, because the duties may be collected "with greater ease, and less loss from pilferage, in "the Outports; unjust, because every mercantile "place in the kingdom is entitled to the same privi- "leges; and impolitic, because the superior economy "and dispatch that prevail at the Outports, are re- "quisite to secure an equality with foreign nations."

On the second of these three arguments it may be observed, that the claim of all the Outports to a participation in the Indian trade, as matter of equal right, stands upon the same principle as the claim of all individuals, which has just been considered, and must be determined in the same way and order; it therefore demands no farther notice here. If it shall be judged, that no larger interest than that of the Outports opposes their claim, then, and then only, will it be entitled to attention.

The first argument is, the known safety, and greater facility, with which duties are collected at the Outports. Whether that facility be, in fact, greater or not, it is needless to examine. If it were indeed so, it would still leave undecided a much more important question,—the danger of smuggling. On that danger the Court have enlarged, in their letters to the President of the India Board, of 13th January 1809, and 15th and 29th April 1812. Your Committee cannot but hope, that these letters will be perused by Members of Parliament, as their contents are material to a just consideration of the subject. The Court have respect-

fully stated to Lord Buckinghamshire, that no adequate answer has been given to these letters: his Lordship, in addition to what he has himself said, has referred the Court to the petitions. The argument just quoted is the most direct, and indeed the only one to the point, which your Committee have discovered in all the petitions. But it does not meet the main objections of the Court, taken from the dangers of smuggling: they remain untouched and unnoticed. Those dangers were contemplated, upon the supposition that only the opening of the Indian trade was in question; and in this way your Committee will now consider them, reserving to a future article some remarks on the still greater danger of smuggling which would follow, if the China monopoly were abolished, and which would be experienced, whilst our merchants were permitted to visit China at all. It is from the facilities of smuggling tea, that ships cleared out for, or from India, would find in the Eastern Islands, in the voyage home, and on the coasts of Scotland and Ireland, that the Court have apprehended the chief dangers would arise. In the Eastern Islands there are no custom-houses, clearances, manifests. There are great ranges of coasts in the remoter parts of the United Kingdom where there is no custom-house: bulk might be broken, and no detection follow where the ship should afterwards be regularly entered. It does not in the least follow, that these evils might not happen, though it should be true, that the taxes on West-Indian and American commodities are safely collected; for these commodities come generally in very large unwieldy casks or packages, are, in proportion to their bulk, of much less value than tea, which is also packed in small portable cases, and they come from countries abounding with regular custom-houses, whence they cannot sail without manifests and clearances: yet, with all these safeguards, your Committee are credibly informed, that the Americans find means to smuggle tea into this country. But, even supposing ships came direct to an Outport, without having broken bulk, what comparison is there between the collection of duties at any port, provin-

cial or metropolitan, and the collection of tea duties with perfect certainty, facility, and a very trifling expence, at the India-House? The objections stated at large in the Court's letters, your Committee beg leave to repeat, remain without any sound answer; and it is extremely material to observe, that the opinions maintained in them, on this subject, are corroborated, by the reports which the Boards of Customs and Excise have made to His Majesty's Ministers, respecting the danger that would arise to the revenue, from the adoption of the new system: a danger which, in their judgment, would be inevitable.

The third argument urged in their petitions is taken from the necessity of securing an equality with foreign nations, which, it is said, the superior economy and dispatch at the Outports will do. If this alleged advantage of the Outports were admitted, it would, in the opinion of your Committee, weigh but little in the general question. The difference cannot be material in itself, and its effect little, in a trade so unlikely to become of any magnitude.

There are, however, other considerations of great weight belonging to the question of opening the Outports, to which the petitions do not advert. One of these is, the immense interests which the port of London, with all its descriptions of merchants, tradesmen, tea-dealers, factors, brokers, dyers, packers, callendrers, inspectors, labourers, ship-builders, ship-chandlers, rope-makers, ship-owners, mariners, and all their train of establishments, warehouses, wharfs, docks, yards, premises, shipping formed in the course of two centuries, in which the Company's privilege, and the law of the land, have made the metropolis the sole seat of the Eastern commerce: all these interests, with the Corporation of London, have represented to Parliament, the ruin in which they would be involved by the opening of the trade to the Outports. The Company's periodical public sales, on which so much of the order and success of their business depend, would be interfered with, and their very large property in warehouses and other buildings deteriorated;

in short, all the institutions, public and private, of the capital, for carrying on the eastern trade, would be shattered or broken down. The removal of the trade would effect this, although the new speculations and enterprises would establish nothing equivalent in other places; far less compensate the losses of the supplanted parties. Your Committee cannot go into this subject, sufficiently, to give a just sense of the magnitude and importance of it; but they may seriously ask,—Is the case equal between the people of London and those of the Outports? Would it be right to expose to privation and ruin one set, by withdrawing from them what they have long enjoyed, in order to add to the comfortable provision the other set already possess; and this only to save them the slight inconvenience of bringing their Indian imports to the port of London?

Let it never be forgotten, too, that the Indian people are concerned in this question. The Court have already, in their letters to Lord Melville and Lord Buckinghamshire, stated their apprehensions, that the opening of the Outports to imports from India might increase the resort of European adventurers to India. It has been advanced, in return, from some quarters, that the police of India is so excellent, as to obviate every danger of this kind. Your Committee are sorry to observe that they find in the records of the Bengal Government, informations concerning the police, which do not warrant them to conclude quite so favourably of it; for, in fact, with all the progressive improvements in the system of the government there, they have not yet been able to bring the police into a state of perfect efficiency. The Fifth Report of the Committee of the House of Commons has entered much into this subject, and one quotation from the conclusion of it may suffice to justify this observation. "It does not, "therefore, appear to have been from any want of "information, in regard to the imperfect state of the "police, that the Government was unable to prevent "its becoming worse, but rather, as your Committee "should suppose, from the difficulties which pre-

"sented themselves to the application of an efficacious "remedy."

Fifthly,—on the China monopoly. Besides the connection already noticed of the China monopoly with the policy of our Indian system, the uniting of this trade under one head is necessary, both on account of the extreme caution required in the conduct of our intercourse with so jealous and inflexible a government as the Chinese, and of the security of the large revenue derived by the British public from this branch of commerce. The habits of the Chinese nation are known to be as fixed as they are peculiar. Their government is a pure despotism, jealous of the smallest tendency to insubordination or innovation; the people are guided by a principle of implicit submission to their superiors; and both government and people hold all disorderly conduct in the utmost abhorrence. Foreign trade is held in low estimation, and the commerce which Europeans have been permitted to carry on is subjected to manifold and rigorous restrictions, intended to prevent the intermixture of strangers with the natives, and to guard against their entrance into the interior of the country, and the hazard of their becoming, in any way, troublesome to the government. The ships of European nations are allowed to resort to only one port in an empire of so vast extent; and there, even, no stranger is permitted a constant residence, without credentials from the sovereign of the state to which he belongs. When a factory is established, for which one spot is fixed, the factors are confined to very narrow precincts around it; they dare not make an excursion beyond those precincts into the open fields, nor enter into the closely adjoining city of Canton. The government of China does not allow to its own subjects freedom of trade, or unrestrained intercourse with foreigners:—both are interdicted; and the restrictions imposed, together with the sumptuary laws in force, oppose the strongest obstacles to any great extension of the sale of our manufactures among the Chinese. The trade with Europeans is given in monopoly to a company of

ten or twelve Chinese merchants, styled the Hong; and these merchants become responsible to the government for the conduct of the foreigners with whom they deal. After the ships are dispatched for the season, the factors are obliged to withdraw to the island of Macao, a low Portuguese settlement, till the ships of next year arrive. And, with respect to the ships, they are, whilst in harbour, under the controul of the Chinese officers, who are empowered by law to take the custody of their guns:—and if, in the intercourses, and consequent frays, between the natives and our English sailors, one of the former happens to meet his death, *by accident*, from an unknown hand, it may produce the most serious consequences; for the Chinese government has been known, in such a case, to claim the life of an European in expiation, and for an occurrence like this the Company's establishment is held responsible, and their trade liable to be stopped. With a government so absolute, in requiring implicit conformity to its peculiar laws and usages, and so marked with pride, suspicion, and despotism, British subjects have the utmost difficulty to act; and the Company's agents frequently submit to caprices and humiliations, to which the honour of a sovereign would not allow any representative of his to yield. Is it, therefore, in the least probable, that the Chinese would tolerate the indiscriminate ingress of numberless unconnected, unaccredited Europeans? or, if they did give them admission, that their multiplied, irregular, desultory visits and intercourses with the natives, would not be attended with disorders, with violations of Chinese usages, (with smuggling, for instance, a high offence in China), which would soon end in the utter expulsion and exclusion of these strangers, or in such injustice and humiliating punishments, on the part of the Chinese government, as might call on the honour of this country to demand redress? The splendid embassy which His Majesty sent by Lord Macartney to the Emperor of China had, with all its imposing, attendant circumstances, and all the skilful address of that nobleman, no influence to induce the Chinese government to relax from their rigid restric-

tions on the commerce and intercourse of British subjects with its territories; and it may be safely concluded, that all which that government must have since heard, respecting the revolutions in Europe, will make it adhere still more obstinately to its jealous precautionary system. To all these probable dangers, the petitioners oppose nothing but the honourable character of Britons, and the example of the American adventurers to China. —Frail dependence! British sailors carry to every shore their habits of excess, as is too often found in the Company's ships, notwithstanding the strict discipline established in them. The American seamen are a much more sober and quiet class of people, and the adventurers of that nation have derived in China a sanction from the pre-establishment and credit of the English factory, to which, from their language and manners, they appeared to be related. It is, indeed, by the prudent, respectable conduct of the Company's representatives there, in the management of their own trust, and the controul exercised by them over other British subjects; it is by this means, and by the extent and regularity of the Company's dealings; by their probity, now so famed, as to pass the bales which have their mark, without inspection, through the Chinese empire, that this jealous and supercilious people have been at length greatly conciliated:—but the Company's establishment could not, on the principles now proposed, retain either its credit or position. To expose a trade of such value and importance to the nation and the revenue, to hazards so great; to break down the present system, with the immense establishments and property connected with it, particularly the China fleet of the Company—a thing unparalleled in the commercial annals of the world,—would, therefore, in every view, commercial, financial, and political, be utterly unwise; and if this desperate risk were run, further evils would await the new system at home. Upon the supposition of a general resort of British ships to China, how would it be possible to prevent the smuggling of tea on the coasts of England, Scotland, and Ireland, with the facility which exists of receiving that article

on board in many of the Eastern Islands, where there are no custom-houses, and with the temptation of evading a duty of ninety-five per cent at home? The petitions offer not the least satisfaction on this point; a point highly interesting, as has already appeared, if the question were only about opening the Indian trade to the Outports; but yet more interesting, in respect to the proposal for laying open the China trade, which is, at the best, a proposal to incur the most imminent risk of losing that trade, and the great revenue arising from it, merely in order to change the hands through which it shall pass; for supposing it to be preserved to the nation, there is no reasonable ground to think that it could be increased, because the Chinese now *take our woollens only in barter* for tea, and the present importations of tea are as large as the country requires.

Sixthly,—On the complaints of the superior advantages enjoyed by neutrals, particularly the Americans, in the Indian trade. The vessels of the American States first appeared in the Indian Seas about the year 1785. At that time several European nations possessed settlements on the continent of India, in virtue of grants from the native sovereigns, recognised by this country, after the Company obtained territorial dominion. It had not then been disputed, that those settlements might receive other European flags as well as their own (though the Company have, within these few years, properly held, that the original grant gave a right of trade only for the ships of the nation to whom the grant was made); therefore the Bengal Government thought it politic to admit the American ships into the British ports, rather than oblige them, by refusal, to carry their custom to the French, Dutch, and Danes. This was, however, merely a gratuitous licence, revokable at pleasure. But, in 1794, the Government of this country, induced by the political circumstances of the time, gave to the United States, by treaty, a right to a direct trade between their own ports and those of British India, on the terms of the most favoured nation: and, in 1797, the privilege of free ingress to the British ports in India was conferred on all

friendly nations. By the long continuance of the war which followed the French revolution, these concessions proved of unforeseen high advantage to the subjects of the American States. The settlements on the Indian continent, of the French, and of the Dutch and Danes, who had fallen under French influence, were successively captured by the English. The Portuguese and Americans were then the only neutrals who frequented the Indian Seas: and the troubles of Portugal at length left the neutral trade very much in the hands of the Americans, who succeeded, in effect, to the excluded traders of foreign Europe, and supplied their wants, as well as those of the increasing population of the United States and the demands of Spanish America. The subjects of those states, undoubtedly, abused the privileges conceded to them by His Majesty Government, in the Indian trade. They were, by treaty, restricted to a direct trade between America and India; but they visited the ports of foreign Europe, going and returning, and became the general carriers. They even supplied our own West Indian and North American colonies with eastern commodities, and they entered actively into the China trade, deriving a facility of admission there from being viewed as a cast of Englishmen; perhaps also a sanction, from the countenance of the British establishment there.

For several years after the appearance of the Americans in the Indian Seas, they were, no doubt, assisted by British capital; partly by that which wanted a remittance to Europe, but to no very great amount. They exported from Bengal in ten years, through which their trade, on the whole, was considerably progressive, and which ended with 1804-5, goods to the amount of Sicca Rupees 3,71,50,029 (£4,643,575), or £464,357 per annum; and they imported to the amount of Sicca Rupees 3,12,48,544 (£3,906,068), or £390,606 per annum. The excess of exports above the imports, being in ten years £737,507, or £73,750 per annum, may be supposed to be the property of British residents in Bengal remitted by the way of America. Whether they were furnished with British capital from

London, and to what amount, it is difficult to ascertain; but it appears evident, that as they proceeded in the trade, their imports to Bengal more nearly equalled their exports, which shews they were better able to do without Indo-British assistance, and probably it was the same as to European assistance.* Upon this trade, however offensive to our private merchants, and in some views also, to the Company, it may be justly observed, that it was favorable to British India. It carried seasonable and large supplies of bullion to that country from year to year, not above a seventh of its imports being in goods, and these chiefly wines and other articles for the consumption of Europeans. It also carried the commodities of India to foreign Europe, to Spanish America, and other places to which British ships, on account of the war, could have no access; and when, by the policy and increasing power of Bonaparte, the produce of this country and its colonies were nearly shut out from the Continent, the Americans still continued to introduce the commodities of India there, and with the returns of their adventurers they probably purchased English manufactures to carry to the American continent: so that this country, also, eventually benefited by their Indian trade. And however much their large participation of that trade became a matter of complaint among English merchants connected with India, it is certain, that whilst we were engaged in war with almost all Europe, those merchants could not, even by circuitous means, have oc-

* Other averages of the American trade with India, from statements before your Committee, may also be here noted.

In Six Years, from 1802-3 to 1807-8.	*Goods.*	*Bullion.*	*Total.*
Imports into all India.....	£957,224	£6,528,250	£7,487,524
Exports ditto.....	6,901,269	25,696	6,926,965
In Three Years, from 1808-9 to 1810-11.			
Imports into all India.....	351,602	4,531,233	4,882,836
Exports ditto.....	5,107,818	9,625	5,117,443

cupied the place which the Americans filled in the Indian commerce: of which position no other proof is necessary, than the frequent want of sales for the goods, public and private, actually brought into the India House, during the period in question. The great progress and profit made by the Americans in the Indian trade, therefore, proceed essentially, not from their activity, or the advantage of individual enterprize, but from their neutral character, which besides giving them access to countries from which belligerents are shut out, enables them to navigate more cheaply, easily, and expeditiously: and it may be taken as a certainty, that whenever war ceases, all their advantages will cease with it, and their power of entering into competition with us, in the trade of their own settlements, be very greatly reduced. The cry that has been raised, and continued against the Company, on this account, confessedly with the view of obtaining a general admission of Indian ships into England, is therefore altogether unfair. If a circuitous trade in Indian commodities, from Britain to foreign parts, has been prevented by the rivalship of the Americans, the Company have suffered as well as individuals; they have suffered, also, by the smuggling of eastern articles from America into our West Indian and North American colonies. They were anxious to check the abuses of the treaty of 1794, and when it expired, they obtained the consent of His Majesty's ministers to impose a double duty on the neutral trade with India, which then applied almost solely to the Americans; but, if the complaints against the rivalship of the Americans in the Indian trade had been well founded, what was the natural and proper remedy? Was it, that the Company, part of whose own trade had, during the war, passed into American hands, should sacrifice the rest of their exclusive privileges, and by the extinction of them, endanger the territorial possessions? Or was it not, obviously, that the Americans should be excluded from a trade, supposed to be carried on at the expence of Great Britain? Yet this cry is still unaccountably kept up, even when we are at war with

America, and the flag of the United States dares not be seen in the Indian Seas! Nay, it is kept up to injure the cause of the Company, after they have actually agreed on enlargements of the trade to England, greater than ever were contemplated, even by the private merchants of India, before the present negociation; and, if enlargements could effect the object, more than sufficient to bring the whole Indian trade of the Americans to the port of London.

It is singular, that the party who complains of the large share that has been engrossed by the Americans of the Indian trade, should be the same party who complain, also, of the large share which the Americans, in a state of neutrality, enjoyed of the British trade between Great Britain and foreign nations. It is well known, that previously to the rupture between England and the United States, it was urged as a grievance, that though America exported from this country to the amount of twelve millions sterling annually, the country was *not* benefited to the utmost possible extent from this export trade, because the British merchants and manufacturers were, by the intervention of America, deprived of the carrying, and of the second selling profit upon the manufactures. America, it was alledged, bought from us to a great extent, and Great Britain was, to a certain degree, a gainer, to the extent of the American purchases; but, because America sold our goods at second hand (to the Spanish Americans for example) it has been alledged, that had it not been for the intervention of the North American States, *we* should have supplied Spanish America, and, in addition to the profits we have received, would have engrossed all the advantage which has accrued to the merchants of the United States from the carrying and circuitous trade. But may it not, on the other hand, be argued, that if the British manufacturers in an open trade, and during a state of war, have found the assistance of America necessary to the calculation of their own manufactures, the same assistance was wanted by the manufacturers of India to the circulation of their productions: that the large exports from India, as well as the large exports from Great Britain, by the Ameri-

cans, were owing to their neutral character: that if the trade between India and England had been as open as is now contended for, the quantity of Indian goods, circulated through the world, could not have been greater than it has been, under the competition that has actually existed between the merchants of the United States and the East-India Company: and that a greater share in the export trade from India could only have been obtained for the free British traders in one of these ways, either by America abandoning, or Great Britain returning to her pacific relations with other countries. If a free trade has the virtue that is imputed to it, why, under complete freedom of trade, has this country been rendered tributary to America for a vent to the produce of British industry? and, if the pacific relations of states pass for no account in such a question, whence the congratulations we so often hear, upon what we have gained, and may yet gain, by the rupture with America?*

* The following statement, which has been received from an intelligent merchant who resided a number of years in America, shews the advantages under which the trade of that country was carried on in a state of peace.

The advantages which Americans, as ship-owners, enjoyed in a state of neutrality, are obvious, not only from their free communication with belligerents, but from other causes.

Their first rate vessels do not cost one half what those of the same tonnage, built in Britain, generally cost: hence, the capital employed is one half less, and one half the insurance is sufficient to cover the property at stake.

The premium of insurance on an American neutral, from Britain to America, was less than half what was given on an English vessel for the same voyage. On Americans the premium was from two to two and a half per cent., on English vessels from five to six per cent.

The countervailing duties in America, induced shippers always to give a preference to American vessels. Goods arriving in America, paid twelve and a half to fifteen per cent. duties; whilst the same goods, by a British vessel, not only paid the same rate of duty, but an additional ten per cent. on the amount of those duties, which is one and a quarter to one and a half per cent. increased duty.

The freight of goods from America to England, in American bottoms, was never, in the best times, higher than one shilling and sixpence per foot; and many times the whole freight of an homeward-bound American of three hundred tons (that is to say, an American going from this country) could have been had for £300

Seventhly.—That the distresses of the manufacturers, the exclusion of our trade from the continent of Eu-

or £400. The cargoes of three-fourths of Americans homeward consisted either of crates of ware, salt, or coals, which are well known to yield but a very small freight indeed, taking the whole difference betwixt the purchase and sale as freight.

The provisioning a ship in America, did not certainly cost more than one half that provisioning the same ship in Britain would have cost. Bread at 16*s.*, beef at 30*s.* to 36*s.*, pork at 45*s.* to 50*s.*, rum at 2*s.*, I believe will not be more than half the British prices for the same articles; and these were the current rates in 1800 to 1805.

Upon a calculation of all these advantages, it will be found that an American, in war time, could make a saving voyage from any of these ports to this country and home, when an English vessel would inevitably have brought her owner into debt; and that an American could actually import goods into the United States from this country, and sell them at their average wholesale importation profit to others, as low as a British merchant could send them to America in a British ship, and deliver them over to be transhipped, without any profit at all.

The American ships, being of a lighter construction than ours, they sail with at least one-third fewer hands.

The following statement will better elucidate these remarks. An American, of 250 tons, is employed in a voyage to Britain and back. Her value, as a first rate vessel for that trade, is £2000, and the voyage occupies five months. A ship of 250 tons would carry 3,000 barrels of flour, at 9*s.* which was the ordinary freight £1,350
The average freight home of such vessels could not exceed 600

£1,950

American Charges	£.	s.	d.
Insurance out and home, £2,000, at 4½ per cent.	95	0	0
8 men, 5 months, at £5	200	0	0
Captain and mate £10 each	100	0	0
2,400lbs. bread, at 16s.	19	4	0
Beef, 10 barrels, at 32s.	16	0	0
Pork, 10 ditto, at 50s.	25	0	0
150 gallons rum	16	17	0
Interest of £2,000, 5 months	41	13	4
	£513	14	0

British Charges.	£.	s.	d.
Insurance out and home, vessel valued at £4000 at 9 per cent.	360	0	0
12 men, 5 months at £5	300	0	0
Captain and mate	100	0	0
360 lbs. of bread for 14 people, 5 months, at 32s.	57	12	0
15 barrels of beef, at £4	60	0	0
15 ditto, pork, at 90s.	67	10	0
220 gallons rum, at 5s.	55	0	0
Interest of £4,000 5 months	83	6	8
	£1,083	8	8

These are not to be understood as the total charges on the voyage, but are those which shew the advantages which Americans have enjoyed.

rope and from North America, its consequent great decline, and the support of the war, require new channels of enterprise, and therefore an open trade.

Every British heart must lament the obstructions to which our commerce has been subjected; must wish for the removal of all continental exclusions, as well as of our differences with America, and that commercial freedom and activity may be restored. It is also extremely desirable, that new sources of trade should be discovered; and natural for those who are now suffering under privations and hardships, to catch eagerly at the flattering prospects and promises, so confidently held out to them from opening the trade with the East. But can the Court of Directors, thoroughly convinced, as they are, that all such expectation are groundless and delusive; that those who should act upon them, if the trade were opened, would be sure to experience ruinous loss and disappointment, and that the abolition of the Company's commercial privileges would be, in effect, the extinction of the whole of the presentIndian system: can the Court, with these convictions, lend themselves to promote a dangerous deception, already too prevalent, at the sacrifice of so much individual interest, and of that public interest, the care of which is entrusted to them? If it were, indeed, probable, that by a slow process, the coumercial intercourse between this country and the East could be enlarged, the effect would be far too distant to relieve present pressures, and the first adventurers be more likely to plunge the trading world into fresh difficulties, as proved to be the result of the general rush in the trade of Buenos Ayres, where it was easy to send exports, but difficult to find sale or return. It will, perhaps, now be said, that the trade with Buenos Ayres has become a regular one: but it can be a regular one only to a very limited extent, being, indeed, partly what subsisted with Lisbon before it was turned into a different channel; it may not, in a long time, replace the vast sums at first lost there, and, at any rate, it displaced no important system existing before. From the late very favourable change in the affairs of Europe, a better prospect of

relief now appears; from the East it will be found that no hope of any can be rationally entertained.

Eighthly.—That a free trade to the East would be a substitute and cure for all present commercial evils; would open an unbounded field to British manufactures, British capital, skill, enterprize, and knowledge, which would not only supply the wants of the vast population of the East, but create wants where they did not exist.

The practicability of extending, in any great degree, the commerce of this country with the natives of the East, in exports and imports, is undoubtedly a vital question in the whole of the discussion respecting the renewal of the Charter: for, if no such extension be indeed practicable, to what end should the present system, with all the establishments which have grown out of it, be destroyed. The British merchants appear to entertain the most extravagant ideas of a new world for commercial enterprise; ideas upon which they are ready to risk their own property, and to sacrifice all the interests of the existing Indian system. The Company, backed by the great mass of British subjects now in Europe, who are acquainted with the countries of the East, maintain, in direct opposition to all such imaginations, that it is not now possible greatly to extend among the inhabitants of the East the consumption of British productions; or, in this country, the sale of Asiatic commodities. On the side of the merchants there is, in truth, nothing but a sanguine theory. On the side of the Company there is the experience of all the nations of Europe for three centuries; there is the testimony of ancient history; there are the climate, the nature, the usages, tastes, prejudices, religious and political institutions of the Eastern people. If the discovery of the passage by the Cape of Good Hope, and the account of the first Europeans sent by that route to the shores of India, were only just announced to us, some explanation might be given of the enthusiasm with which the hope of unbounded commerce thither is entertained; but that, after all the knowledge which successive ages have afforded upon this subject, men of

general intelligence and cultivation should, in opposition to the usual course of human affairs, adopt the fond idea of entering, at once, into the enjoyment of a new world of commerce, is a most striking instance of credulity, and of the power which interest and imagination united have to impose upon the understanding. The theory of Dr. Adam Smith did not anticipate any such sudden burst of new commerce, when he pronounced, that "the East Indies offered a market for the manufactures of Europe, greater, and more extensive, than both Europe and America put together." Eminent as Dr. Smith certainly was in the science of political economy, he was not infallible. His information respecting India was very defective, and erroneous; his prejudices against the East India Company extreme, and his prognostics concerning the Indian government wholly mistaken. In the period which has elapsed, of near forty years, since he first published his work on the *Wealth of Nations*, the endeavours of all Europe and America have made no discovery of that immense market for European manufactures, which, he said, was offered by the East Indies: yet the same doctrine seems to be still in the minds of some of the Petitioners, who make it a serious charge against the Company, that its exports to the immense regions of the East do not amount to a fifth of the exports of this country to North America. But, as well might it be a matter of charge against the merchants of England, that their exports to the great continent of Africa, which contains so many millions of inhabitants, less influenced by religious prejudices, and more inclined, by taste and manners, than the people of the East, to use our productions, do not equal their exports to our remaining American colonies. The reason is obvious in both cases. All the North American colonists are the same people as ourselves, live under a climate nearly similar, and have a variety of commodities, valuable to us, to exchange; the Africans live under a tropical sun, are poor, and have little means of purchasing even such of our manufactures as they would like to use. It has been already noticed, that the Americans

have been in the habit of carrying our commodities into other countries.

A profound observer of human affairs, the President Montesquieu, had, before the time of Dr. Smith, who however overlooks his opinion, reasoned more agreeably to nature and experience on this subject. "Although," says he, "commerce be liable to great re-"volutions, it may happen that certain physical causes, "such as the quality of soil and climate, shall for ever "fix its character. In the commerce which we carry "on with India in modern times, the export of money "thither is indispensable. The Romans carried to "India, every year, about fifty millions of *Sesterces*. "That money, as ours now is, was exchanged for "goods, which they brought back to the West. Every "nation which has traded to India has uniformly car-"ried the precious metals thither, and brought back "goods in return. Nature herself produces this ef-"fect. The Indians have their arts, which are adapt-"ed to their manner of life. Our wants are essen-"tially different from theirs; and what is luxury to us, "never can be so to them. Their climate neither "requires, nor permits the use of almost any of our "commodities. Accustomed to go almost naked, the "country furnishes them with the scanty raiments "they wear; and their religion, to which they are in "absolute subjection, instils into them an aversion to "that sort of food which we consume: they, therefore, "need nothing from us but our metals, which are the "signs of value, and for which they give in return the "merchandize that their frugality, and the nature of "the country, supply in abundance. Ancient authors, "who have written upon India, represent the country "precisely such as we now find it, as to police, to "manners, and to morals. India always has been, "and India always will be, what it now is; and those "who trade to India will carry money thither and "bring none back."

As the Court have, in their letter of the 13th January 1809 to the President of the India Board, given the same views, and in some detail, on this subject, not

deriving their opinion from any single authority, but from the broad page of history and practice, it is unnecessary for your Committee again to enlarge upon it. But may not the attention of the manufacturers of woollens, metals, cotton fabrics, potteries, be still called to the habits of the Indian people, the bulk of whom live all their days upon rice, and go only half covered with a slight cotton cloth; the rice and cotton both produced by their own soil? The earnings of the common labouring classes, and consequently their expenses may be estimated, on an average, not to exceed* £4. 10*s.* per man per annum. They are indolent by nature, frugal by habit, under manifold religious restrictions:—what demand of the manufactures from Europe is to be expected from these? Of the better classes few are rich, unless those connected with Europeans: and *even these* during a course of near three centuries, in which they have lived in European settlements, have adopted none of our tastes or fashions, unless perhaps in a few articles of jewellery and hardware, looking-glasses, and carriages, with the use of a mantle of broad cloth in the cold season. As to the north of India, though the climate there be less dissimilar to ours, the people are extremely so: and in poor, ill-governed countries, where property is insecure and concealed, what hope can there be of a vent for foreign luxuries? The persons who now imagine that region to present a great field for commerce, have no conception of the difficulty of carrying goods there from the sea; the delays, expense, and insecurity, that must be experienced when the boundaries of the Company's government are passed; and in finding and bringing back returns if the European commodities could be disposed of. With respect

* In a late statistical account of Dinagepore, a province of Bengal, there are statements of the annual expenses of different classes of society, and among them one of the expenses of a labouring man, with a wife and two children. The amount is only Rupees 22.10.11, or near £3 per annum, being at the rate of fifteen shillings per head. The article of clothing for this family of four persons is only six shillings per annum.

to China, it is not denied that it might, in all probability, take off many of our manufactures, if the Chinese government would allow the free dissemination of them. The jealous restrictions of that Government, however, which though they have been already stated, it may be proper to notice again here, prevent their own subjects, in gen ral, from any dealings with Europeans: and it has been seen, that the magnificent style of Lord Macartney's embassy, which bespoke the grandeur of the British sovereign, with the refined diplomatic talents of that nobleman, which even struck the Chinese courtiers, were incapable of moving the Government to depart, in the smallest degree, from its established policy. If, instead of the regulated, long-experienced organ for European trade, the Company's Canton establishment (under whose respectability, in fact, the Americans were admitted), a swarm of unconnected private-traders were to be let loose upon that country, it is altogether probable, that the Chinese would either shut their doors entirely upon, or contract even the present narrow entrance.

If so many proofs of want of knowledge on Indian subjects did not croud on your Committee, they might express surprize, at finding any persons still so uninformed, as to hold up the trade carried on by individuals, in the time of Cromwell, as gainful to the parties and useful to the nation. The fact is now ascertained to have been notoriously otherwise. The competition of the traders led them to undersell their exports in India and their imports in England. The public, indeed, for a little time, got Indian goods remarkably cheap; but the adventurers could not go on, and Cromwell, induced by the representations made him, in which several of those very adventurers joined, restored the Company, *in order to save the Indian trade to the nation.*

Parliament is now told by the Petitioners, that the private-trade, to which individuals were admitted by the Act of 1793, enlarged by the arrangement of 1802, has succeeded and produced a profit, even whilst the Company have been trading to a loss. The Court

have very substantial reasons to believe, that although some articles of private-trade may, at certain times, have sold to a profit, yet that large importations of other articles, both into India and into England, have repeatedly sold to a loss, or have remained long on hand for want of sale.

The nature of this trade should be considered. The numerous commanders and officers of the Company's ships (a very superior class of nautical men) have no adequate provision from direct pecuniary allowances: their compensation has always been given in the privilege of trade, and a certain allowance of tonnage freight free. This has generally made them traders; and as they are to look to trade for their emolument (for but few, comparatively, make money by passengers) they continue to adventure, though often with little success: and your Committee are assured, that though they pay no freight nor commission, being their own agents, they still find it, on the whole, a precarious unproductive business. Now, if these men do not succeed, it can hardly be expected that those, who have freight and commission to pay, can fare better.

But it will be said, that other individuals do nevertheless embark in this trade. To this it is to be answered, that the manufacturers of indigo in Bengal, an article originally promoted, and always fostered by the Company, generally send their produce to England, and this is a matter of necessity, because the great bulk of the article cannot otherwise be disposed of. Again, there is a certain annual amount of acquisition by Europeans in India; and as this, doubtless a large amount in all, is, in one way or another, to be remitted to England, merchants in India may find their account tolerably well in taking up such money in India, investing it in goods, and granting bills, at a rate favorable to the drawer, payable from the sales in this country. A sort of new transit capital arises in this way every year; and men may be tempted, occasionally, to seek to make an advantage of it, who would not regularly fix a capital of their own in the

trade. There is also a third sort of trade from India, which men of large capital speculate in, when favorable occasions seem to offer; and, in this way, sometimes cotton piece goods, sometimes cotton-wool, sometimes indigo and raw-silk, have been adventured in. But your Committee suppose it to be an undisputed fact, that these larger adventures have repeatedly been attended with heavy losses to individuals; particularly the very great importations of piece-goods, exceeding in value two millions sterling, in 1802: the large importations of cotton, and even of indigo, since that time: and what may be sufficiently decisive on this head is, that very large quantities of those have remained long in the Company's warehouses without a sale, or uncleared after sale. The following abstract account will sufficiently exhibit these facts.

Value of Private Goods from India remaining in the Company's Warehouses.

	SOLD.	UNSOLD.	TOTAL.
On the 1st. Jan.			
1809	£1,576,185	£815,000	£2,391,185
1810	1,370,958	1,057,760	2,428,718
1811	2,513,761	1,005,000	3,518,761
1812	2,547,668	1,002,932	3,550,600
1813	2,411,259	1,008,000	3,419,259

Of the Sold Goods remaining in the Warehouses, 1st. January 1813.

246	bales cotton wool have been in warehouse	ten years	£2,460
112	do - -	five - - -	1,120
6,600	do - -	four - - -	66,000
30,000	do - -	three - - -	300,000
6,000	do - -	two - - -	58,930
42,958	bales cotton-wool, value	- - -	£428,510

		Brought forward	£428,510
71	chests of indigo remaining seven years	- - -	£4,828
722	do six	- - - - -	49,096
424	do five	- - - - -	28,832
230	do four	- - - - -	15,640
5,121	do three	- - - - -	358,228
1,593	do two	- - - - -	108,324
9,080	do one	- - - - -	613,838
17,241	chests indigo, value	- - - - -	1,178,786
			£1,607,296

Piece Goods Imported in 1803, 1804, *and* 1805.

Remained in warehouses in	1809	£276,784
Do - - - - - -	1810	153,891
Do - - - - - -	1811	132,094

But it will still be said, the private-trade between Europe and India has greatly increased since the enlargement of 1793 was granted.

To explain this it is to be remembered, first, that, as already stated, the commanders and officers of the Company's ships are, in a manner, obliged to be traders, and that they have greatly increased in number since 1793: they are forced to carry out goods, and therefore to bring goods back, because, *in general*, specie would be a losing remittance. Secondly, that the number of Europeans in India has been very greatly increased in India since 1793. Every class has increased; the civil, military, and medical servants of the Company; the King's troops, from a few regiments to twenty thousand men; the naval servants of the Crown; ladies, lawyers, free-merchants, free-mariners, and the mixed race of European descent, now become a great multitude, who imitate, as far as they can, the fashions of their fathers. For all these descriptions of persons, every thing required for use or luxury is sent from this country: thus the exports

are necessarily enhanced; and exports being made, returns for them in the commodities of the country become necessary, whether they are sure to answer or not.

A brief view of the state of the private trade between England and India may here be given from the Indian Registers of External Commerce, commencing with 1795-6, when the act of 1793 began to operate in India, to the year 1810-11. But it is to be remarked, that only the Bengal registers commence in 1795-6: those for Madras and Bombay not till 1802-3.

Statement of the Private-Trade between London and Bengal, from the Year 1795-6 *to* 1801-2 *both Years inclusive.*

	IMPORTS into BENGAL.			EXPORTS from BENGAL.
	Merchandize. *Sicca Rupees.*	Bullion. *Sicca Rupees.*	Total. *Sicca Rupees.*	Merchandize. *Sicca Rupees.*
1795-6	17,91,623	4,81,538	22,73,161	84,08,800
1796-7	15,49,906	2,33,096	17,83,002	50,79,310
1797-8	11,88,043	3,46,176	15,34,219	69,71,529
1798-9	10,13,105	7,30,209	17,43,314	41,07,834
1799-1800	31,50,696	16,36,405	47,87,101	67,66,649
1800-1801	40,98,360	3,74,112	44,72,472	84,87,336
1801-1802	36,51,650	3,24,019	39,75,669	1,31,97,420
	1,64,43,383	41,25,555	2,05,68,938	5,30,18,878

Statement of the Private-Trade between London and British India, from the Year 1802-3 *to* 1810-11, *both Years inclusive.*

	IMPORTS.			EXPORTS.		
	Stores and Merchandize. *Sicca Rupees.*	Bullion. *Sicca Rupees.*	Total. *Sicca Rupees.*	Merchandize. *Sicca Rupees.*	Bullion. *Sa. Rup.*	Total. *Sicca Rupees.*
Bengal, in nine Years, from 1802-3 to 1810-1811.	3,35,33,443	52,19,768	3,87,53,211	7,62,87,574	2,540	7,62,90,114
Madras - -	1,14,96,218	50,17,839	1,65,14,057	93,72,303	5,867	93,78,170
Bombay - -	1,48,03,575	29,65,079	1,77,68,654	93,18,775	53,644	93,72,419
Total - -	5,98,33,236	1,32,02,686	7,30,35,922	9,49,78,652	62,051	9,50,40,703

This is the comparative state of the private-trade with Bengal and India, in former periods, beginning with 1795-6 and at the present time. But the increase is, by no means, to be conceived as merely the result of the enlargement given by the Act of 1793, or afterwards. It is (let it be again observed) most materially to be ascribed to the increase in the number of Company's commanders and officers; to the necessity of making returns in goods from India for their exports; to the great increase of Europeans and their descendants in India; to the vast increase in the culture of indigo, cherished by the Company and permitted to come in their ships before the act of 1793; and what the enlargements of that act and subsequent measures have opened the way for, has been occasional large speculation in cotton piece goods, raw cotton, and indigo, which speculations have more often failed than succeeded. But the great conclusion to be derived from the account of the trade since 1793, is this: in all the period, of nearly twenty years, from that time to the present, in which, undoubtedly, facilities and enlargements, never enjoyed before, have been given for private enterprize and adventure, in which the private trade has considerably increased, and on the whole a very ample experiment has been made, *not one new article for the consumption of the natives of India has been exported*, and little perceivable difference in the few articles of metals and woollens of which they participated before. This is a very remarkable fact, and ought to make a deep impression on all persons who, in any way, interest themselves in this subject. Let us not hear of that unfair charge, so often repeated, that the Company's restrictions have prevented persons from availing themselves of the privilege held out by public regulations. Would the commanders and officers, not restrained by high freight, or any uncertainty of getting tonnage, not have carried out articles for the use of the natives, if they had found that any such were saleable? Would not European residents in India, keen merchants, and acquainted with the dispositions and tastes of the natives, have commissioned for such ar-

ticles, if they had seen any vent for them? Would not native merchants, who buy and sell European commodities, have recommended the importation of things for the natives, if they had seen any chance of a sale? Yet, of 54,000 tons allotted for the private trade since 1793, only 21,806 tons have been actually used by private merchants, and these filled wholly with commodities for the use of Europeans. On the whole, then, this may be pronounced a decisive experiment: a decisive proof that there is no opening, nor any material opening to be expected, for the sale of European articles for the use of the natives of India.

Of the import trade from India on private account, since 1793, after what has already been said, it may be sufficient to present the following abstract.

IMPORTS *from* INDIA

	Piece Goods.	*Raw Silk.*	*Cotton Wool.*	*Indigo.*	*Sugar.*
	£	£	£	£	£
1793-4	83,439	34,938	—	47,038	12,465
1794-5	296,098	17,069	11,054	105,346	6,286
1795-6	134,046	3,058	5,693	235,013	8,610
1796-7	319,053	3,315	30,148	273,654	15,525
1797-8	167,210	3,684	67,674	283,893	77,594
1798-9	214,616	—	38,109	440,275	105,200
1799-800	295,658	—	445,413	782,449	94,959
1800-1	197,732	53,009	395,372	491,472	222,118
1801-2	394,890	36,660	142,480	636,046	36,172
1802-3	861,872	37,588	180,915	789,314	41,424
1803-4	884,467	44,963	67,006	602,582	44,643
1804-5	673,787	65,218	93,242	811,214	65,391
1805-6	633,911	12,184	18,201	939,861	—
1806-7	164,111	165,839	122,072	549,871	—
1807-8	69,314	178,128	125,636	1,434,238	9,171
1808-9	18,199	89,085	158,032	510,406	—
1809-10	64,918	12,780	208,190	764,203	—
1810-11	48,043	85,498	550,078	1,382,767	10,827
1811-12	149,079	90,335	257,545	425,074	20,924
Total	5,670,443	933,351	2,916,860	11,504,716	771,309

in PRIVILEGE TRADE.

Salt-petre.	*Pepper.*	*Drugs.*	*All other Articles.*	TOTAL.	
£	£	£	£	£	
—	—	3,830	—	181,710	1793-4
32,706	—	1,320	—	469,879	1794-5
13,084	—	10,283	—	409,787	1795-6
17,169	—	19,885	—	678,749	1796-7
33,527	—	13,200	—	646,782	1797-8
13,168	—	61,484	8,810	881,662	1798-9
—	18,077	102,804	7,779	1,747,139	1799-800
12,483	40,041	130,009	24,736	1,566,972	1800-1
62,326	70,400	151,354	193,889	1,724,217	1801-2
101,871	120,673	206,054	246,870	2,586,581	1802-3
18,495	37,488	142,858	18,232	1,860,734	1803-4
11,220	33,718	92,479	6,781	1,853,050	1804-5
—	1,376	111,875	5,564	1,722,972	1805-6
—	572	24,230	2,067	1,028,762	1806-7
—	19,918	90,506	4,774	1,931,685	1807-8
—	—	19,372	2,135	797,229	1808-9
—	—	62,491	16,826	1,129,408	1809-10
1,982	38,533	58,791	22,813	2,199,332	1810-11
89	19,921	178,366	27,690	1,169,023	1811-12
318,120	400,717	1,481,191	588,966	24,585,673	Total.

IMPORTS *from* INDIA *in* PRIVATE-TRADE

	Piece Goods.	*Raw Silk.*	*Cotton Wool.*	*Indigo.*	*Sugar.*
	£	£	£	£	£
1793-4	98,190	—	37,921	218,841	5,054
1794-5	162,967	—	—	140,974	9,834
1795-6	127,146	—	—	202,218	3,807
1796-7	55,303	—	—	148,659	1,324
1797-8	25,254	—	21,740	141,506	499
1798-9	29,499	—	11,334	266,176	6,197
1799-800	40,077	1,034	10,538	226,708	4,140
1800-1	91,387	46,615	8,889	280,886	17,332
1801-2	34,965	274	—	168,588	7,211
1802-3	207,799	—	8,151	89,261	827
1803-4	174,848	11,164	—	100,052	924
1804-5	180,034	60,233	593	269,926	—
1805-6	138,089	32,044	7,636	452,997	—
1806-7	36,401	86,231	19,485	224,515	135
1807-8	42,229	74,902	18,104	419,580	—
1808-9	47,334	12,696	35,220	300,152	—
1809-10	12,646	90,433	22,021	231,735	—
1810-11	76,335	121,695	7,626	360,180	1,602
1811-12	51,112	148,867	—	47,637	—
Total .	1,631,615	686,188	209,258	4,290,591	58,886

of COMMANDERS *and* OFFICERS.

Saltpetre.	*Pepper.*	*Drugs.*	*All other Articles.*	TOTAL.	
£	£	£	£	£	
—	5,280	76,640	3	441,929	1793-4
—	—	60,093	—	373,868	1794-5
29	2,593	121,823	925	458,541	1795-6
—	11,163	57,453	910	274,812	1796-7
—	—	96,389	7,772	293,160	1797-8
—	1,768	129,372	3,715	448,061	1798-9
3,060	8,041	64,990	12,220	370,808	1799-800
—	4,378	50,222	36,710	546,419	1800-1
97	12,501	41,326	3,465	268,427	1801-2
—	18,367	102,530	29,117	456,052	1802-3
—	8,388	18,411	1,516	315,303	1803-4
1,058	7,471	5,819	45,852	570,986	1804-5
144	7,395	84,445	5,360	728,110	1805-6
14	980	47,529	9,556	424,846	1806-7
377	—	45,960	16,724	617,876	1807-8
48	271	83,503	41,379	520,603	1808-9
156	4,762	66,414	5,108	433,275	1809-10
194	17,664	91,678	13,422	690,396	1810-11
28	1,398	60,494	19	309,555	1811-12
5,205	112,420	1,315,091	233,773	8,543,027	Total

SHORT ABSTRACT.

Total Privilege - - - -		£24,585,673
Private Trade - - - -		8,543,027
		33,128,700

Which contained:

Indigo	£11,504,716	
	4,290,591	
	£15,795,307	
Cotton	£2,916,860	
	209,258	
	£3,126,118	
	£18,921,425	
All other articles		14,207,275

It may be proper to point out to attention, the great proportion which the articles of indigo and cotton bear to the whole of these imports; and likewise to refer to the great quantities of these two articles which, it has already appeared, remain still in the Company's warehouses, either unsold or uncleared. Of the practicability of enlarging the imports into this country of Indian productions, fit for the European market, it was formerly stated by the Court, that the diligence, not only of the different East-India Companies of Europe, but of individual Europeans trading through the whole extent of the Indian Seas, has been excited, during three centuries, to discover articles which might be profitably exported to Europe, and, after all the experience thus acquired, particularly in the present day, when the coasting and internal trade of India has been greatly enlarged, it is not reasonably to be assumed, upon merely theoretical ideas, that there is any source of materials, raw or manufactured in India, yet undiscovered, by which the imports from India into this country can be profitably augmented: and, with respect to those articles which may now be considered as the staples of India, namely, cotton piece goods, raw silk, indigo, raw cotton, and sugar, the demand for the

first is reduced and limited, by the vast growth and excellence of the cotton manufactures of Britain and Europe; the second, to whatever extent demanded, can be brought home in the ships of the Company; the third, already imported to an extent that nearly supplies the consumption of Europe, may also be easily carried home in the same channel; and the article of raw cotton, brought from a great distance, at an unavoidably high freight, which renders it incapable, when this country is engaged in war, and North America and Portugal at peace with us, of entering into competition with the cottons of Georgia and Brazil, both superior in quality, and brought to this market more expeditiously, to meet the fluctuations of price and demand, and at a far cheaper rate of freight. As to sugar, if it could be imported to this market, so as to rival the produce of our West-India colonies, which it cannot be in time of war, surely this is not a trade which could be, on the whole, profitable to the nation: and no other great article of Indian produce has ever been thought of; except hemp, of which the culture is still in an early stage in India, not capable of standing a competition with Russia, whenever our intercourse with that country is open. It is in this state of things, when the Company cannot find vent for more exports in the East, when their warehouses are filled with goods from the East for which there is no demand, and when they suffer from the continental restrictions in common with all his Majesty's subjects, that the Petitioners, whose chief complaint is of a general stagnation of trade, censure the Company for not enlarging their's.

Ninthly.—The demand of a full and entire freedom of trade to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope, including China, and all the countries within the Charter of the East-India Company.

Such are the views of the Petitioners: professedly no less than a complete subversion of the fabric of the East-India Company, and all the great commercial establishments connected with it; involving, also, the hazard of the political interests of the British empire,

Indian and European. Certainly it must be presumed, the Petitioners expect such advantages to follow from all these changes, as shall compensate for the immense sacrifices which they require; but your Committee hope, it has sufficiently appeared from the preceding discussion, that all such expectations are illusory and vain. If, however, they are not indeed the offspring of sanguine theories, but the result of sober rational consideration, might not the same sobriety of thought be expected to pay an equitable regard to the ruin which would be inflicted on existing interests, and to look to some suitable provision against the possible contingency of final disappointment? Yet these important objects seem to have received no adequate attention. Against the alledged danger of excessive speculation (a danger which is, in fact, a public concern), it is argued, "that "the enterprize of individuals is uniformly limited by "their means and success." But if they involve all their friends, and sink in their attempts, and this should be the case of many, would not the result be a general calamity? The argument of the Petitioners assumes, that the new trade will be finally successful; but the foregoing review deprives them of all right to go upon this supposition.

For the deep injuries which all the London establishments connected with the Eastern trade would receive, there is absolutely no relief or reparation of any kind adverted to; and, for the Company, they are told, first of their wealth, knowledge, and experience (all of which have been before disparaged), as enabling them to oppose unassisted private efforts; that, if they can carry on trade to greater advantage than individuals, they have nothing to fear, and that they will reap their reward in competition. All this is particularly applied to the China trade, which is not a new trade, nor, as has been shewn, either susceptible of increase, or likely to be preserved at all as a general trade. The transfer of it to other hands would add nothing to the nation, whilst the entire benefit of it is necessary for the support of the political interests of the Company. Secondly, it is proposed, that for in-

demnifying and remunerating the claims of the Company, they shall "have a fair and equal impost on the "trade in question." If the trade and rate of impost were both likely to be considerable, which your Committee see no reason to suppose, the idea of an indemnification for the whole, by giving afterwards a part (and probably a small part), can hardly be treated as a serious idea.

But for the detriment which the Company, in their political capacity, might sustain, for all the ill consequences that might ensue to the government and immense population of India, no provision whatever is proposed. And against an entire failure of the vast prospects, now so sanguinely entertained, this consolation is at last administered, that "the very worst that "can occur, in the event of the abandonment of the "trade by the public, would be, *that matters might* "*return again to their present state.*"

But can it be seriously supposed, that after the fabric of the Company, and its immense dependent and connected establishments in England, in India, and China, should have been set aside, and left to decay and ruin; when India should have been laid open and the China establishment superseded, and so much capital sunk, that things could be brought back to their former state? The possibility of such a mighty convulsion, and the ease with which it is contemplated by the Petitioners, may be sufficient to excite a salutary fear of the rage of theory, speculation, and innovation; may suggest the prudence of stopping short of the precipice to which they would conduct us; of at least resting at some point, so far safe as not to expose the whole of the empire, Indian and European, to the terrible alternative here brought into view. A great extension of the trade to or from the east, the object for which such dangers are to be run, is shewn, in the preceding pages, to be impracticable; and it has been also shewn, that in the prosecution of the attempt to obtain it, the interests of British India, and of the finances of this country, would be endangered: but if an experiment is still required to be made in the vast continent of Hindostan

and its adjacent islands (for to push the experiment into China would be to risk the trade of that country, and all its advantages, without the chance of any benefit) the means of making a large, ample experiment, in which the whole nation may participate, through the port of London, are now offered; means which shall give the fairest opportunity to ascertain the practicability of extending the trade, without breaking down present establishments, or exposing the empire, in case of failure, to the most disastrous consequences. At the safe point, therefore, here described, your Committee humbly hope the wisdom of His Majesty's Ministers and of Parliament will still see fit to rest.

(Signed) HUGH INGLIS,
ROBERT THORNTON,
JACOB BOSANQUET,
WM. F. ELPHINSTONE,
THEOPHILUS METCALFE,
JOSEPH COTTON,
CHARLES GRANT,
GEORGE SMITH,
EDWARD PARRY,
SWEENY TOONE,
WILLIAM ASTELL.

THE END.

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BSB Bayerische StaatsBibliothek
MDZ Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek

Debates at the general court of proprietors of East-India stock, on the 17 th and 23d february 1813, on a petition to parliament for a renewal of the Company's charter as far as it regards their exclusive privileges with an appendix: containing a copy of the petition, and the report of the Committee of Secret Correspondence, detailing observations and opinions on

London 1813

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